3
694.i.24.
3

THE PLAGUE OF THE HEART:

Its { *Nature* and *Quality*:
Original and *Cauſes*:
Signs and *Symptoms*:
Prevention and *Cure*.

WITH

Directions for our behaviour under the preſent Judgement and *Plague* of the Almighty.

By JOHN EDWARDS Miniſter of *Trinity* Pariſh in *Cambridge*.

CAMBRIDGE:
Printed by *John Field*, for *Edmund Beechinoe*, Bookſeller in *Cambridge*, 1665.

THE

PLAGUE

OF THE

HEART

To the Inhabitants of the Town of *Cambridge*, especially to my loving Parishioners of *Trinity*,

GRACE & PEACE.

AS you have the Plague *of the* Body *wasting in your streets, so you are to take notice of a* worser, *even the* Spiritual Plague *of your* Hearts. *To this purpose I hope* this short Discourse *may be somewhat serviceable, which (even when it shall please God to take away the* Bodily Disease) *may still be usefull to you, to guard you against the* Spiritual, *but more poisonous Distemper. It is recorded to the honour of Queen* Eleanor, *that when her Royall Husband in the Holy War was wounded with a poisoned Knife by a desperate Saracen, the Incomparable Lady sucked the poison out of his Wound. A signal instance of her Love to him! Sin, Beloved, is Poison: I wish unfeignedly, I could by any holy skill and method, ease you of* that more dangerous Venom *at your* Hearts: *O that this* Paper *might prove a* Plaister *to* draw it! *It is true, I must confess my self one of the meanest and unworthiest of all those* Physitians and Guides of Souls *that are in the Church: I may not be able to treat so successfully of this* Spiritual Disease *as those worthy persons, who are of* greater practise *and* larger experience. *But I request you, that when you make tryal of what is* here, *you would call upon* God *for a* blessing; *and if you find any good, thank* God *for*

it, not me. *I will not beg your excuſe, by telling you* theſe *are very ſlender Preparations for the Preſs; for I choſe rather to haſten this little Thing, and give it you* as it is, *then to looſe the opportunity of* doing good, *by making it* better. *There is nothing in it can render it worthy of the publick view, but its ſeaſonableneſs, and your kind acceptance of it. Many of the* Directions *which you will meet with, I gave you lately in ſome of my Sermons which I Preached ſince the* Hand *of* God *hath been heavy upon this Town. I muſt tell you, I deſigned not* language, *but* living well. *It is not required that the* Phyſitians Bill *be curiouſly Penned, but that the Medicines be there faithfully preſcribed. Beſides, a* gaudy *and* flaunting *ſtile is no ways ſuitable to theſe* Mournfull Times.

I have onely this to beg of you, that you would be mindfull of me at the Throne of Grace, beſeeching the Lord that he would crown my Miniſtery *with the converſion & ſalvation of many ſouls, and that he would make me feel the power and influence of thoſe ſaving Truths upon* my own heart *which I deliver unto* you. *And my earneſt Prayer for you ſhall be, that* ye may walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleaſing, being fruitfull in every good work, and increaſing in the knowledge of God: that ye may approve things that are excellent, that ye may be ſincere, and without offence, till the day of Chriſt; being filled with the fruits of righteouſneſs, which are by Jeſus Chriſt unto the glory and praiſe of God. *The Great and Good God multiply his Gifts and Graces upon you: The God of all bleſſings bleſs you and yours, and keep you from* ſin *and* ſickneſs. *This is the earneſt Prayer of*

Cambridge *Novemb.* 11th 1685.

Yours in all Chriſtian ſervice

J. E.

THE PLAGUE OF THE HEART.

1 Kings 8. 38.

——*Which ſhall know every man the Plague of his own heart.*

THeſe words are part of King *Solomons* prayer, which he made at the dedication of the Temple: the drift of the whole is, that God would be pleaſed, whenſoever any judgements and calamities befall the *Iſraelites*, to hear their requeſts, and anſwer their prayers put up in that place, and to remove their croſſes, and forgive their ſins. This is the deſign of the Prayer; and the Lord appeared to *Solomon* afterwards, aſſuring him, that he had heard this his ſupplication. Here then is a refuge and an eſcape for penitent ſinners, againſt Diſtreſſes, Plagues, and Troubles; But every Prayer will not prove effectuall; obſerve therefore the ſeverall Requiſites fairly intimated in this Holy Addreſſe of *Solomon*, namely, *confeſſing of Gods name, confeſſion of ſins*, and *turning from them*; and then laſtly, the prayer and ſupplication muſt be made by thoſe *Iſraelites which ſhall know every man the Plague of his own heart.* Chap. 9. Verſ. 3.

Which ſhall [*know.*]

1. Take notice of,

2. Lament and be ſorry for.

3. Avert and cure.

[*Every man.*] Every one, all perſons of both ſexes, of all qualities.

[*The Plague.*] 1. The *ſtroke*, the *blow*; that's the Originall ſignification.

2. Any great judgement ſent by God for the puniſhing of ſin, the laſhes of the Divine Nemeſis, ſtrokes on the eſtates or bodies of men.

3. That ſignall *ſtroke* of God, that *Plaga Dei*, that infectious and fatall Diſeaſe which we call the *Sickneſs* with an Emphaſis. Thus the word imports, but here it is applyed to the

[*Heart.*] 1. The ſoul and its faculties, principally; they received a *blow*, a foul knock in *Adam*; and ſince they are bruiſed daily by our venturing at the breach of Gods Laws.

2. The life and practice, conſequently; for *out of the Heart are the iſſues of Life.*

So that as we conſider in the Heart in mans Body, its paſſages, apartments, and ventricles; ſo here we may well underſtand, both the corrupt principles and evill diſpoſitions of our natures, and the vanities and follies of our lives, which are but the emanations of the former.

[*His own Heart.*] The man is to look into his own breaſt, and ſee if he find any *tokens* there, he muſt live at home, he hath work to do within doors.

So that I might preſent you with an Obſervation from every word; but my deſign at preſent is onely to take occaſion from theſe words to treat of the *Plague of the Heart*; for though (as I have intimated already) the word here uſed, doth not properly and primarily ſignifie the *Diſeaſe* of the *Peſtilence*, yet in the Verſe foregoing it is joyned with (*Sickneſs*) [*whatſoever Plague, whatſoever ſickneſs there be,*] and it plainly referrs to the *Peſtilence* or *Plague* Emphatically ſo called. [*If there be Peſtilence* in the Land] One Plague ſuggeſted another to the good mans thoughts: and indeed it is no unuſuall thing with pious perſons, to make even the *diſeaſes* of their *bodies*, adminiſter matter of devout meditation for the *health* of

Verſe 37.

their

their *ſouls*: there is nothing that they ſee, but it brings God to their thoughts, there is nothing in Nature, nothing in Providence that they converſe with, but their ſanctified minds can make ſome good uſe of: a devout Fancy turneth earth into heaven, and all ſecular occurrences into ſomething Divine and Spirituall. Did not our Saviour make uſe of Parabolicall ſpeeches to ſlip in to the fancies, and prevaile upon the affections of his Auditours, and to repreſent to them heavenly matters more forcibly and lively? to this purpoſe ſerve all thoſe excellent Similitudes and choiſe Metaphors which the Holy Scripture is full of; amongſt the latter, that which I have now pitched upon is no contemptible one.

Sin is the diſtemper and ſickneſs of the ſoul; which the good Pſalmiſt knew well enough, when he made that Petition, *Heal my ſoul, for I have ſinned againſt thee.* Neither is Sin any light and inconſiderable diſtemper: all the laws and rules concerning the Leproſie of old, do but ſignifie to us more plainly the grievous nature of ſin: the very *words* and *doctrines* of vitious men and hereticks, are compared by St *Paul* to a *Canker* or *Gangreen*: nay, the ſinner is a moſt wretched Lazar, and his ſoul a very Spittle of diſeaſes, ſickneſſes, ſores and bruiſes; *the whole head is ſick, the whole heart faint, from the ſole of the foot, even unto the head, there is no ſoundneſs in it, but wounds, and bruiſes, and putrifying ſores.* And then (as the ſumm of all) the ſinner is an *Infected* perſon, he hath the *Plague*, the worſt of Plagues, the *Plague of the Heart*. It will be worth our while, to ſearch into the nature of *this deadly diſeaſe*, to ſhew the reſemblance between the *ſpirituall* and *bodily Plague*, and to know the nature of *the one* by *the other*.

Pſal. 41. 4.

2 Tim. 2. 17.

Iſai. 1. 5, 6.

They agree as to their generall *Nature*, and may be fitly expreſſed in the ſame terms; for the beſt maſters of Phyſick acquaint us, that the Peſtilence is a dangerous *Poiſon* which corrupts and invenoms the bloud, and taints the ſpirits, and ſpoils the agreement and harmony of the parts of mans body. And Sin is the *Poiſon* that ſeizes on our *ſouls* and ſpreads it ſelf into our members and ſenſes. Of the wicked men which imagine miſchief in their hearts, the

Pſalmiſt

Psal 140. 2, 3. Psalmist says, *Adders poison is under their lips:* The venom soon makes way from the *Heart* to the lip. And if James 3. 8. (according to St *James*) *The tongue be an unruly evil, full of deadly poison*, the Heart is much more so. In short, the least sin is rank poison, it corrupts and debauches our minds, perverts our faculties, destroyes our good principles, it forces even nature it self, it is violent, and disagreable to rectified reason, it is improportionate to our souls, it puts all out of order and due frame, and brings in unspeakable confusion. Poison cannot make greater havock on our bodys, then Sin on our immortall souls. But because the Essences and abstract natures of things are hard to find out, we shall view it further in its Effects and products, and in its Cure too: as Physitians say, that by these we shall certainly know what the disease is. But before we come to those, let us stay a while and consider the *Original* & *Causes* of the *Spirituall Plague*, or the way how it is propagated.

And in this too, as well as in the other, it will appear that the *Bodily* and *Ghostly* disease resemble one another.

For, not to speak here of the primary cause of all diseases, and of the Pestilence more signally (which all but Atheists acknowledge to be the hand of God,) nor to reckon up all other causes which are assigned, many of which are in the dark and can scarcely be explained, without a piece of old Philosophy called *Occult Qualities*;

The two main Naturall and Secundary causes of the *Pestilence*, may very well intimate unto us the rise of the *Spirituall Plague*; (*viz.*) Inward corruption, Outward infection.

1. That originall corruption and pollution which we derived from the loyns of our first Parents: which though indeed it may seem to be a cause of the second rank, yet because we bring it into the world with us, and it is rivetted so fast into the hearts of the best here on earth, because it is something bred within and brought up with us; therefore I call it the *Inward corruption*, and that which answers to the *putrefaction of the humours in* the body, which is the root of the Pestilence. And thus there being something corrupted within,

2. 'Tis no wonder that there is an *Outward infection & Corruption*

Corruption (the corruption of our ways) that is, that we communicate the corruption unto others, and are again infected by the vitious world. For as we experience that men by lying or ſitting with infected perſons, or by keeping ſomething on which the contagion hath ſeized, or by taking in unholſome vāpours and exhalations with the common air, have the *Plague* derived unto them; juſt ſo is Sin propagated and increaſed: Whileſt we more nearly converſe with our wicked neighbours, we participate of that *fatall poyſon*, which will deſtroy both them and us. Mich 7. 3.

But let us paſſe from the *Cauſes* to the *Signs* and *Symptomes* of this *Spirituall Plague*, by which I mean all the ſad attendants and conſequences of the diſeaſe; and here we will ſet down thoſe ſeverall Paſſions, Tokens, and Indications by which men commonly judge of the *Bodily Plague*.

I begin firſt with the exceſſive *Heat* and *Inflammation* which attends the diſeaſe: the Sinner is one always in a feaver; and therefore that expreſſion of the Evangelicall Prophet is worth our notice, who reproves the Jews for *inflaming themſelves with Idols*; and not onely the fond worſhiping of Idols, but every ſinfull paſſion and purſuit of luſt is furious and enraged, fierce and fiery, and (which is a ſad truth) theſe *flames* are but a prologue to *everlaſting burnings*. But as a man in a violent feavour is *ſick* and *weak*, and yet ſo *ſtrong* that he is able enough to beat his beſt friends, and thoſe that would hold him within his bed; ſo fares it with every ſick ſinner. Which leads me to the *ſecond Symptome* (which naturally follows from that exceſſive heat;) namely Iſa. 57. 5.

Inordinate motions, reſtleſſneſſe and unrulineſſe. And here I might lead you to the ſinners chamber; draw aſide the curtains, and let you ſee how he *tumbles* and *toſſes*: you may think he ſleeps ſoundly; yet you cannot ſay he *takes his reſt*. *The wicked are like the troubled Sea, when it cannot reſt, whoſe waters caſt up mire and dirt: there is no peace; ſaith my God, to the wicked.* It is Sin that overturns the courſe of nature, and raiſes tumults both in the world and in the ſinners conſcience, and at laſt theſe exorbitances, theſe *hot fits*, bring the man to *diſtruction*. Which is the Iſaiah 57. 20, 21.

third Symptome of the diſeaſe, for ſin is a violent *madneſs*, a ſtrange *diſtraction* of the mind and reaſon, and an alienating of a man from himſelf: In this *Phrentick ſtate* was St *Paul* once, when he puniſhed and perſecuted many of the Saints; you have the confeſſion from his own mouth that he
Acts 26. 11. was *exceedingly mad againſt them.* And idolatry (which
Jer. 50. 38. you heard before was an inflammation) is in another Prophets account no leſs then *madneſs*. Sin then is the worſt *delirium* and *phrenſie*, for in this mad humour men abuſe and barbarouſly wound their own ſouls, which the Wiſe man
Prov. 1. 18. knew well when he ſaid of ſinners (*they lay wait for their own bloud, they lurk privily for their own lives.*) And this *madneſs* is *long* and *laſting*, (as the ſame Preacher delivers it) (*the heart of the ſons of men is full of evil; and madneſs is in their heart while they live.*) I might add another Symptome near of kin to this, which ſometimes attends the Bodily Plague, but always the Spirituall. I mean a ſtrange *vertigo* and *meagrim* which every wicked man is troubled with; elſe he would not *ſtagger* ſo ſhamefully as he doth, and *decline* his duty, and *giddily* ruſh into evil company, and ſuffer himſelf to be *ſhaken* from the truth, and (as the Apoſtle phraſes it) [*be carried about with every wind of doctrine.*] Again look as when the Poyſon hath ſeized on the whole maſs of bloud and got poſſeſſion of the heart, the uſuall and equall mixture of the bloud is ſpoiled, and thence followeth a coagulation and ſtagnation of the ſpirits: ſo is it in the *Spirituall Plague*, which makes the ſinner *cold* and *dull*, benummed, and indiſpoſed to every vertuous action: his heart like *Naballs*, *dyes within him*, *and he becomes as a ſtone.* The *Holy Spirit is* ſtifled; then it is no wonder that the man grows ſtupid, that his pulſe is ſo low and languide: *ſwoonings* and *faintings* are no unuſuall things in the *Plague.*

But then in the next place, the bloud being putrified and invenomed, and it's motion retarded, we ſee that *boiles* and *ſwellings*, *ſpots* and the like *tokens* diſcover themſelves in the outward parts. And are there not as ſad *breakings out* of ſin, are there not fouler *blemiſhes* and *ſpots* upon every wicked man? elſe what mean thoſe palpable *riſings* of luſt and uncleanneſs? What are thoſe *ſwellings* and *tumours*

of

of pride? What are those dismall *characters* and worser sort of *Carbuncles* in the intemperate person and common drunkard? What are those lamentable and apparent marks, those *blows* and *bruises* which oppression and cruelty are the cause of? What are those curses and oaths which I hear from the swearers mouth? such *breaking out at the lips*, is no good sign in the spirituall patient. Alass! how many ways doth a naughty heart discover it self? How many *Plague-sores* doth the sinner carry about with him? Upon this must follow another effect and consequent, namely, *Filthiness*, *pollution*, and *noisomness*: but of this loathsome attendant on the Spirituall Plague, I shall speak some what when I come to consider the cure of it.

The next sad companions of the Plague (as of most sicknesses) are *anguish*, and *aches*, *pain* and *disease*. Sure I am they are the inseparable associates of the *Plague* of *sin*; out of the *corruption* of mans heart is soon bred the *worm of conscience*. Horrour and a certain looking for of judgement, a sting and tortures, these are things that flagitious sinners know at the first naming: and as wounds and sores do usually prick and pain most towards night, so when *death* approaches, the guilty conscience finds it's torments doubled and redoubled upon it.

I might add another Indication and Symptome, which is common to the Plague with all other sicknesses, and that is a certain *nauseating* and *refusing of food*, as it must needs be when the pallate is out of taste and cannot relish, and the corrupt matter hath infected the stomach. Thus is it with a sick sinner, he hath lost his *spirituall taste*, and cannot *savour the things of God*, but in the mean time the sweets and delights of the wicked world strike briskly upon his vitiated pallate, and are taken down with a huge *complacency*.

But to leave these more common Signs, I pass to another direct and *proper* Symtome, which is the *Pestilentiall malignity and Contagion*, which ever waits upon the Plague, it is of that ill nature that it propagates and derives it self from one to another. *Adam* was the first that had the *Spirituall Plague*, and he got it by eating the forbidden fruit, and since it hath sadly spread and descended from one to another. All sin to this day *is Epidemicall* and *catching*:

ing: we are corrupted our ſelves, and we corrupt others.

How many are there that take a courſe to damne themſelves? but that is not all, they muſt damne their friends and neighbours too. This, this is the nature of ſin, it diffuſes it ſelf in a large circle, it runs as in a train, and doth miſchief on all ſides, it over-runs the whole man, ſoul and body.

Our Inward man, that is firſt depraved and infected. Alas! the brain is faulty, the underſtanding blind and dark, it is dull to conceive what is good and vertuous, but it purſues vain, unprofitable, and fruitleſs notions, it is ſtuffed with carnall reaſonings, fleſhly wiſdome, fond diſputes, pride and falſe principles: there is errour, folly, raſhneſs, and unbelief raigning in the judgement: *We are vain in our imaginations, and our fooliſh heart is darkned. We are wiſe to do evil, but to do good we have no knowledge.*

Rom. 1. 21. Jer. 4 22.

In the affections too there is inordinacy, coldneſs and inpotency, a loving of what we ſhould hate, and a hating of what we ſhould love.

The infection ſeizes alſo on our memories; as *Thucydides* tells us of ſome perſons who were infected in that great plague at *Athens*, that by reaſon of that ſad diſtemper they forgot themſelves, their friends and all their concernments. Moſt certain it is that by the Spirituall infection men forget God and their duty, and their memories are onely tenacious in holding what is evil, eſpecially vanities and injuries.

The will likewiſe receives no litle damage by the contagion, it being made weak and feeble, and wholly indiſpoſed to good, it draws back at the propoſall of vertue, but is reſolute, obſtinate and ſtubborn in the ways of unrighteouſneſs. The conſcience is dull and dead, and (as the Apoſtle well expreſſes it) *is ſeared with a hot iron*, it diſcharges not it is office aright either in acquitting or condemning, but is ſadly inſenſible, preſumptuous and deſperate.

1 Tim. 4. 2.

I might proceed to ſhew you how all the parts and members of the body are tainted and infected, and are (in the Apoſtles words) *inſtruments of unrighteouſneſs unto ſin.*

Rom. 6. 13.

But I will ſay ſomething of the *adherency* and *pertinacy* of this Spirituall diſeaſe, the infection ſticks cloſe and cleavs

to

to our nature, it is like the *fretting leproſie* in the wall; the wall muſt be pulled down before it can be extirpated. We muſt be ſtriving every day againſt our luſts, but they will not be quite rooted out, the *leproſie of the ſoul* will not wholly be removed till the wall be thrown down, till the houſe be diſſolved, even our *houſe of clay*. And as we ſee the *Peſtilence* lyes ſtill and dormant for a long time, and then breaks forth more furiouſly, being rouzed (as it were) from ſleep, it gets up and ſpreads it arms wider, to take in greater numbers into it's fatall embraces: ſo is it oftentimes with this *Spirituall diſtemper*, it ſeems to be quelled and conquered, but ſoon after it regains it's ſtrength and by the malice of that evil Spirit it makes freſh aſſaults upon us, and we are brought into it's ſubjection more then ever. Levit. 14.41.

Laſtly, That which brings up the rear in the *Body of ſin*, is *the decay of ſtrength, weakneſs, univerſall languor*, and *a ſudden approach of death*. For as in the diſeaſe now reigning, the ſpirits are ſeized upon, their ſtrength and vigour is exhauſted, and ſo conſequently, the motions and functions of the body are hindered and deſtroyed, nature is debilitated, and the ſtrength failes; ſo doth the Infected Sinner grow *ſicker* and *weaker*, fainter and feebler every day, diſabled to perform any offices of Chriſtianity. And the caſe being thus, death is making it's fatall approaches; as we ſee in Infected Perſons, when the *poyſon* hath fully ſeized on the throne of life, and it's retinue, the vitall ſpirits, nothing but death is exſpected; the throbbs at the heart, and the faint and uneven *pulſes*, are but as ſo many ſad *tolles* of the *Paſſing-Bell*: ſo may you even *Ring out* for the ſinner; after ſo many ſad Symptoms that I have named, it is no wonder that he dyeth, and that being dead in ſin, he alſo dyeth eternally.

The diſeaſe then being (in it ſelf) mortall, let us learn from the *Cauſes* and *Symptoms*, what may be the moſt effectuall way to *prevent* it, and *preſerve* our ſelves from it.

In order then to *Prevention* and a happy *Cure*,

Labour to *know* the diſeaſe; 'tis true here, as in other diſtempers, the perfect knowledge of them is half the cure. Do therefore what thou canſt, to ſee the odiouſneſs of ſin

in it ſelf, and how loathſome it makes us in the eyes of God, *who is of purer eyes then to behold iniquity.* All the laws of old about uncleaneſs, (as I have told you before) were deſigned on purpoſe, to expreſs the pollution of ſin; for there is nothing but *this* can defile us; nothing but *this* can ſeparate us from the favour of God. The Poets indeed preſent ſome of their Gods obſcene and debauched, luſtfull and impure; but our God, as he is purity it ſelf, ſo nothing can make him abhorre a creature, but what is contrary to it. 'Tis ſin therefore, and that onely which ſtains and defiles us, which ſlurrs and debaſes us, in the midſt of all our riches and honours.

Again, In order to the Cure, know that the *Spiritual Plague* is the worſt ſort of Plagues: all the *Plagues* inflicted on *Pharaoh*, were nothing in compariſon of his *hardneſs of heart*: all the boyls and blains, the froggs and lice, and ſwarms of flies, were not half ſo dangerous and deſtructive, as *the Plague of his heart.* For conſider with me, that

1. *This* ſeizes on the *beſt* part, the *ſoul* of man, which was made for God, and bears his Superſcription.

2. This being a *Spiritual Plague*, is therefore *Inviſible*, and hard to be diſcerned; *this*, rather then the *other*, may be called the *Peſtilence that walketh in darkneſs*, it deſtroys ſilently; and this *Murthering-piece* (as they ſay of a piece charged with white Powder) goeth off without a *Report.* Some ſins there are, which like Plants and Herbs, have no viſible motion in their growth, they advance by degrees, ſoftly and inſenſibly; though it muſt be confeſſed, there are others which are ſo plain and palpable, written in ſo *large a Character*, that *he that runs may read them.* Some perſons indeed there are, that are ſo fouly Infected, that every one may ſee, that *their ſpot is not the ſpot of Gods Children*: But there are others, that are not ſo much as *ſuſpected*, and they may paſs for *Clear-Corps*, let the *ſpiritual Searchers* be never ſo inquiſitive. The Prophet *Jeremy* gives the reaſon, [*The heart is deceitfull above all things, and deſperately wicked, who can know it?*] The ſcene of vice is the Heart, which is remote, and therefore to be vitious and to be known to be ſo, are

Deut. 32. 5.

Jer. 17. 9.

two

two things. Thus, though in the *late* Philosophers sense, *The mind be more knowable then the body*, yet the *diseases* of the former, are harder to be discovered then those of the latter.

3. As it destroys more *silently*, so more *suddenly* then any *Bodily Plague*; it hides it's fatall shafts for a while, but then it surprises the poor sinner unawares, and wounds him without hope of cure.

4. It *sticks closer*, and *stays longer*: *this* is that which *doth so easily beset us*; this is (in the *Apostles* language) *Sin that dwels in us*, which is hereditary and inseparable, and (as I have told you already,) is like that *fretting leprosie*, which could not be removed, without demolishing of the house it self. 'Tis sad to consider, how inveterate this Plague grows by custome and frequent practice. *Can the Æthiopian change his skin, or the Leopard his spots? then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evill.* Heb. 12. 1. Rom 7. 17. Jer. 13. 23.

5. It *spreads further*: it diffuseth it's poyson on all our duties, actions, and performances: the poyson is in the very fountain, and so derives it's hurtfull nature to the streams; or, like polluted vessels, we taint all that is poured into us; *We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesse is as filthy raggs.* Our most solemn attendances on God in his Ordinances, our praying, hearing, reading, and conversing, as well as all our actions in our particular callings, are more or less, *touched* with this *Infection*. Therefore Isa. 64. 6.

6. It destroys *greater numbers*; not unfitly is sin compared to *leaven*, *a little* whereof *leavens the whole lump*; Which I take to be the meaning of those words of the *Preacher*, [*One sinner destroyeth much good*:] he is able to infect whole Families and Towns, if he be not carefully *shut up*: the *Bodily Plague* may kill it's thousands, but this it's ten thousands. You have *a Bill* brought in every *fortnight*, to tell you how many dye of the *former*; but alas, how many *souls* every week perish by the *latter*? If you had the *totall* of those who are *infected* and *dye* of the *Plague* of *sin*, not one Parish would be found *clear*, no not one house, which had not cause to put up a more pathetick Ecclesiastes 9. 18.

Prayer,

Prayer, then [*Lord have mercy on us.*] More *ſouls* periſh then *bodies*. The *Bill* of *Mortality* runs high, [*Broad*
Mat. 7. 13. *is the way that leadeth to deſtruction, and many there be which go in thereat.*] That was a great *Increaſe* in the
Gen. 6 12. days of *Noah*, *When all fleſh had corrupted it's way upon earth.*

7. *This* is the cauſe of all *other Plagues*: the forbidden fruit, as if it had been ſtrangely *impoyſoned*, ſhattered the goodly frame of our firſt Parents bodies, and their poſterity in all ſucceeding ages have fared abundantly the worſe for that *ſinfull furfeit*.

But beſides this, they are indamaged on another account, their own *actuall ſins*, and the *enormities* of their *lives*, have ſome of them in their own nature bred diſtempers in their bodies, and all of them have moved God to puniſh them with ſeverall ſorts of diſeaſes, with the dreadfull *Peſtilence*, in a more ſignall manner, and with the direfull Plagues of War, Famine and Scarcity.

The deſign of all this, is to ſtirr thee up whoſoever thou art, to conſider well the *Plague of thy own Heart*, to underſtand how deſtructive it is to thee. There will be great hopes of thy wellfare, if thou once *throughly knoweſt* thy danger. Doſt thou then deſire to be delivered from thy *body* of *ſin*? Is it a *body* of *death* unto thee? Is it heavy, uneaſie, and burthenſome to thee? 'tis a ſign it begins to *mortifie*. Art thou ſo ſenſible of thy ſin, that thou hateſt it with a perfect hatred, and even loatheſt thy ſelf for the commiſſion of it? Art thou willing to be ruled by the Spirituall Phyſitians, and true Lovers of Souls, who adviſe thee to beware of ſin, and call upon thee, and beſeech thee not to drink poyſon, for it will be thy death?

In a word, Art thou *ſenſible* of thy ſickneſs and malady, and haſt thou attained to this piece of knowledge, (namely) to underſtand that *thou canſt not cure thy ſelf*? Let
Hoſ. 13. 9. that of the Prophet, or of God rather, by his mouth perſwade thee of the truth of this Aphoriſm, [*Oh! Iſrael, thou haſt deſtroyed thy ſelf, but in me is thy help.*]

Thus alſo let me add, That *delays* and *demurrs* are unſpeak-

ſpeakably dangerous in this affair. Alas, poor ſouls, *now is* the time for you to ſee your Plague, and underſtand your miſery; for if you ſtay till death, then indeed will you ſee it with a witneſs. Oh! *then* the guilty ſoul will know what it is to be void of grace and holineſs, but it will not know how to help and recover it ſelf. So it is, that one minutes delay may coſt thee thy life.

Look out then for a Phyſitian preſently; *Naaman* when he had the leproſie, repaired to the *Prophet*. Some there are, that nominate a particular Saint, as a proper Phyſitian, for every diſtinct diſeaſe: and St *Sebaſtian* hath the *Plague* for his charge belike. Sure it is, that there are Quacks and Empricks enough in the world, who can *palliate* the diſeaſe, and *skin over* the wound, but know not how to *cure* either. There are *Doctors* who preſcribe Phyſick, which leavs the Patient as ſick as it found him: he is ſick at *Heart* ſtill; I, *there* indeed lies the diſtemper, at the *Heart*: the cure muſt be wrought within, the applications muſt be ſuch, as are able, not onely to *ſtint* and *ſilence* the pain for a while, to *mitigate* and *aſſwage* the grieved part, but to *remove* even the very *cauſe* of the diſtemper. Wine and merry company, the pleaſures and entertains of the world, their jollities and catches may *ſing* the mans ſorrow aſleep, and flatter his diſeaſe for a time; but *hæret lateri lethalis arundo*, the poyſoned Arrow ſticks faſt in him, and the diſeaſe by ſuch methods as this is not eradicated. Thus there are *Phyſitians of no value*, *miſerable comforters* to the ſick ſinner, who (with the Woman in the Goſpel) may ſpend all he hath upon them, and yet be never the better. But there is *balm in Gilead*, there is *a Phyſitian there*: *Whether ſhould we go but unto Chriſt? he hath the words of eternal life*. But be ſure you be not defective in theſe following things.

1. Have a good opinion of Him: great hopes may be conceived of thy doing well if thou *likeſt* thy Phyſitian.

2. Deſpiſe not the *meaneſt* advice: if it be but [*waſh and be clean*,] hearken unto it. The *cheapeſt* Medicine may be the beſt. But

3. If it should be *chargable*, and must cost thee pains, refuse not the Physick upon that account; Or

4. If it seem *strong* and *bitter*, no ways pleasant and toothsome, take it down thankfully; as we take common Physick, and are content to be sick, that we may be well.

Thou being thus prepared before-hand, and answering affirmatively to that question which our Saviour put to the diseased, [*wilt thou be made whole?*] I commend unto thee these following *Preservatives* and *Antidotes* against the *Plague* of the *Heart*.

The first is a *holy fear* of the *Spiritual Plague*. Be affraid to offend God. *Joseph* made use of this *preservative*, when he was set upon and assaulted by his lascivious Mistress, [*How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?*] So true is that of *Solomon*, [*A wise man feareth, and departeth from evill.*] That we may then avoid the *infection* of *sin*, let us be *working out our salvation with fear and trembling*: let us *sanctifie the Lord of Hosts, and let him be our fear, and let him be our dread*: And let Christ his Advice to his Apostles prevail here, [*Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him, which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.*

Gen. 39. 9.
Prov. 14. 16.
Isa. 8. 13.
Mat. 10. 28.

The second rule for preventing the *Spiritual Plague* is, that we shun all *Infected places and persons*.

1. All places and dwellings where sin takes up it's abode, and keeps open house, for the entertainment of all comers. Such are those *Schools* of *Vice*, *Shops* of *Sin*, and *Nurseries* of *Prophaness* and *Lewdness*, which generally are erected in every *City* and great *Town*. We must be carefull that we *Walk not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stand in the way of sinners, nor sit in the seat of the scornfull*; or, *in the chair of Pestilences*, (as the *Septuagint* render it.) But the places are to be avoided

2. For the persons sake. You are therefore to reckon notorious sinners, as those that have the *Plague-sores* upon them: by associating with them, you partake of their sin; your commerce with them draws the infection

to

to your ſelves. *This* is the reaſon of St *Pauls* counſel which he gave his *Epheſians*, [*Have no fellowſhip with the unfruitfull works of darkneſs.*] And of *Solomons* dehortation, [*Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not into the way of evill men, avoid it, paſs not by it, turn from it and paſs away.*] And more particularly he guards us againſt the *ſtrange Woman*, as if ſhe (as well as others of her wicked profeſſion) were *Infected*, [*Remove thy way far from her, and come not nigh the door of her houſe;*] for (as he adds) [*Whoſoever toucheth her, ſhall not be innocent.*] The *Pſalmiſts practice* and *reſolution* ſhould be our pattern, [*I have not ſat with vain perſons, neither will I go in with diſſemblers: I have hated the Congregation of evill doers, and will not ſit with the wicked:*] and it follows, [*I will waſh my hands in innocency, and ſo will I compaſs thine Altar, O Lord.*] The Good man waſhed his hands, before he converſed with God; but had he come juſt then out of wicked company, he had had much more reaſon to have done ſo. The Church Story reports, that St *John*, and *Polycarp* (his Scholar) made all the haſte they could out of the *Bath*, when they eſpyed *Cerinthus*, that Arch-hereſick, to be there, as if they feared infection from the very *water* that mans limbs were waſhed in. And concerning that Martyr and Diſciple of St *John*, (even now named) we are told, that it was his uſuall cuſtome to *ſtop his ears* at the *wicked ſpeeches* of ſome that lived in his time. You know who it was, that made a *Covenant* of *Chaſtity* with his *eyes*; and he was a *Wiſe man* that wiſheth us to make a *vow* of *temperance* with the ſame ſenſe; that is, that *we look not on the wine* when it ſparkles in the Glaſs. This mans Father fell fouly, by a laſcivious glance upon *Bathſheba*; and therefore, it is likely he guarded *that ſenſe* better for the future; and he deſires God, to *Set a watch over his mouth, and keep the door of his lips*, that he might ſhut out *Infection* there. We ſhall do well to ſtop up all the avenues and ways by which ſin uſually enters; we muſt not approach ſo much as the *confines* of Satans Kingdom; we muſt *abſtain from all appearance of evill*, ſhunning the *occaſions* of ſin, and *hating even the garment ſpotted by the fleſh.*

Ephes. 5. 11. Prov. 4. 14, 15. Prov. 5. 8. Prov. 6. 29. Pſal. 26. 4, 5, 6. 1 Theſ. 5. 22. Ep. Jud. 23.

The third effectuall *Preſervative* againſt the *infection* of ſin, is a *holy confidence, undauntedneſs, and truſting in God:* For as we ſee, that a fearfull fancy and imagination, melancholly and a dejected ſpirit, have brought diſeaſes upon mens bodies; ſo is it as true, that *fearfullneſs* and a *deſponding ſpirit*, have betrayed men to the commiſſion of ſin. Then therefore we conſult our own welfare, and the health of our ſouls, when we confide and rely upon God. But this muſt be done in the way of duty and Prayer.

In the next place then, get the *Fire of devotion* to *air your houſes*, to *warm* your *hearts*, to *inflame* your *ſouls*. Obſerve therefore the Connexion of the words prefixed to this Diſcourſe, [*Which ſhall know every man the Plague of his own heart, and ſpread forth his hands toward this houſe.*] While our hands are lifted up in devout Prayer, our ſpirituall enemies cannot prevail. Be ſure then daily to uſe *this perfume, this incenſe of Prayer*; this is an excellent *remedy* againſt the *Spiritual Plague*.

To this belongs *Confeſſion*, and an *humble acknowledgment* of our ſinfull ways; by this we may *diſgorge* our ſelves, when our conſciences gripe us, and ſin makes us
Pſal 32. 3,4. *ſick*; by this we cleanſe and eaſe our ſouls. [*When I kept ſilence*, (ſaith that good King) *my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long, my moiſture was turned into the drought of ſummer.*] Theſe were the ſad effects of his ſinfull ſilence, and hiding of his ſin; but the remedy
Verſ. 5. follows, [*I acknowledge my ſin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid.*] Uncover therefore thy folly, and make thy breaſt bare before God; as I have ſeen diſeaſed Cripples lying in the midſt of the ſtreets, opening their bodies, and ſhewing their grievous wounds and ſores, and then by hideous lamentations, extorting charity and pitty from beholders. We read that *Hezekiah* took a *lump of figgs and laid it on the boyl* which he had, and ſo recovered. Alaſs! How many are there, that (with our firſt Parents) uſe *figg leaves* for their *Spiritual ſores and Plagues*, concealing their faults, and hiding them, if it
Prov. 28. 13. were poſſible, from the eyes of God? But, *He that covereth his ſin, ſhall not proſper*; as we ſee many have periſhed.

riſhed of the *Plague*, becauſe they would not *make it known*.

Confeſſion muſt be accompanied with *grief*, and *ſorrow*, and *hatred* of ſin; ſuch a *ſorrow* as *pricks* the very heart: *this* will *break* the *boyl*, and *take down the ſwelling*. Beg then a broken and a contrite heart, and the cure is half done.

Now for to *perfect* the *Work*; the *Blood of Jeſus, applyed by a lively faith*, is a *ſoveraign remedy*. Chriſt crucified is more effectuall for the cure of our *ſpirituall Maladies*, then that *brazen Serpent* was of old to the *Iſraelites*, for the healing of thoſe that were bitten and ſtung with fiery Serpents. Believe then in *this Jeſus*, ſtedfaſtly look up unto him, for *with his ſtripes we are healed*. The *Phyſitians Blood* is the onely *Medicine* for the *Spirituall Patient*; *this* alone can *waſh out* the *ſpots of ſin*, *this* is *that fountain opened for ſin, and for uncleaneſs*. Let us here cleanſe our polluted and corrupted natures; let *that ſun of righteouſneſs ariſe upon us, with healing in his wings*, hiding our ſins with his *merits*, healing our natures by his *Sacred Spirit*. Iſa. 53. 5. Zac. 13. 1. Mal. 4. 2.

And this muſt be effected by Evangelicall Faith, which *puriſies the heart*: By this then we are to apply the *gracious Promiſes* of the *Goſpel*, which are made and prepared on purpoſe, to *cleanſe us from all filthineſs of fleſh and ſpirit*. Nay, theſe are not onely *Purgatives* to remove the corrupt humours and infectious maſs, but they are *Cordials* to refreſh the weak and fainting ſpirits. Here is *generous wine* indeed, when thou *goeſt abroad* into the world, *drink full draughts* of this *next thy heart*, and it will *keep* thee from the *infection* of ſin. Acts. 15. 9. 2 Cor. 7. 1.

And not onely the *Promiſes*, but the *whole Word of God* muſt be made uſe of, as the food and Phyſick of the ſoul; all the Pages of that *holy Volumne* are like the *leaves of the Tree of Life, for the healing of the Nations*. Take this Book often into thy hand, carry it along with thee, read it over, ſtudy and meditate upon it; *Bind it continually upon thy heart, and tye it about thy neck: When thou goeſt it ſhall lead thee, when thou ſleepeſt it ſhall keep thee, and when thou awakeſt it ſhall talk with thee*. Here is Prov. 6. 21. 22.

an excellent *Amulet* to bear about with thee, it will be both *a grace* and *a guard*, an *ornament* and *ſafety*; hang it always therefore at thy *heart*, and thou ſhalt never do *amiſs*. *This* will diſcover thy ſecret ſins and in-moſt ma-
Heb 4. 12. ladies unto thee; *For the Word of God is quick and powerfull, and ſharper then any two-edged ſword, piercing even to the dividing aſſunder of ſoul and ſpirit, and of the joynts and marrow; and is a diſcerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.* *This*, this will ſearch and lanch thy conſcience; no leſs then three thouſand perſons were pricked
Act. 22. 37, 41. to the heart, at one *thruſt* of this *ſpiritual ſword*, at one ſingle Sermon.

My next advice, in order to the cure of this fatall *Plague* of the *Soul* is, that we do our endeavour to *improve afflictions*; for theſe are *medicines* againſt ſin, *bitter* but *wholeſome* medicines. Gods judgements on a Land may prove good *Sudorificks*, and make the ſinner *ſweat*, and the *peccant humours waſte away*, and *drive out the venom from the heart*. *Folly is bound up in our hearts*, and theſe *Rods of Correction* muſt, or may *fetch it out*. Moſt ſucceſsfull did this *ſeverer medicine* prove to the Church;
Lam 3. 15. Verſ. 19, 20, 21. [*He hath filled me with bitterneſs*, (ſaith ſhe) *he hath made me drunken with wormwood.*] And it follows, [*Remembring my affliction and my miſery, the wormwood and the gall; my ſoul hath them ſtill in remembrance, and is humbled in me: this I recall to minde, therefore have I hope.*] Oh! *Smell* to this *wormwood*, and it will prove an excellent *preſervative* againſt the *Plague of Sin*. Afflictions are deſigned by God for our amendment; Let that deſigne take effect upon us; let thoſe terrible *Thunderclaps clear* and *purifie* the *air*. As Naturaliſts obſerve, that one poiſon is an Antidote againſt another, So let this grievous *Peſtilence* which is now upon the Land and upon this Town, drive out the *Plague of the Heart*. *Ringing of Bells* (they ſay) is ſome ways ſerviceable to remove the Infection. Oh! let every ſad *toll* for our deceaſed Brethren, put us in minde of our *Mortality*, and promote the *death* of ſin in us.

Laſtly, *Keep a diet*, in order to the *preſerving* of thy ſelf from the *Souls Plague*. Too high and plentifull a feeding

feeding increaſeth any diſeaſe in us; ſee that thou be *moderate* in the uſe of the creatures: *Take heed to thy ſelf, leaſt at any time thy heart be overcharged with ſurfetting, and drunkeneſs, and cares of this life.* Indulge not an intemperate courſe of living, for *death is in the pot* which is *ſet on* by *luxury* and *wantoneſs*. If thou calleſt thy ſelf a Chriſtian, be content to be *dieted, kept in*, and *confined* by the ſtricter rules of the *Goſpel*. Luke. 21. 34.

And now, what ever effect thoſe uſuall *Medicines* and *Receipts* may have for the curing of the *Bodily Plague*, I am ſure, *theſe* that I have named, are *approved* by *Chriſt* and his *Apoſtles*, that great *Colledge of Phyſitians*; you may take them ſafely, and with confidence of ſucceſs; and I pray God give a bleſſing unto them.

And thus having inſiſted on the Metaphor in the Text, I ſhall now treat more *at large*, and deſcend to ſome plain *Directions* for our better behaviour in theſe ſad times, both in reference to the preſent *viſitation* of the *Plague*, and the ſad concomitants of it, *poverty* and *neceſſity*.

And the firſt *Direction* is this, Be ſenſible of Gods Judgments now upon you, and tremble at them. *Know therefore and ſee, that it is an evill thing and bitter, that you have forſaken the Lord your God.* This was the uſe which that *Holy man* made of Gods diſmall providences, [*My fleſh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am affraid of thy judgments:*] And again, [*Thou even thou art to be feared.*] Who knows, but that theſe *preſent* calamities are prologues and preſages of *far worſer?* Certain it is, that this is the duty incumbent on us at preſent, to *ſerve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear, ſeeing our God is a conſuming fire.* Here then you are to be called upon, to *acknowledge* that it is *Gods Hand* that is now heavy upon you. *Shall there be any evill in a City, and the Lord hath not done it?* No ſurely; there is no evill in the *great City* of this Nation, no evill or Plague in the *Countrey*, but God muſt be acknowledged the author and diſpoſer of it. This is the τὸ θεῖον, that *divine ſuperintendency* in all our calamities, which *Hippocrates* ſpeaks of, and frankly acknowledgeth in all diſeaſes. And Chriſtians ſhould much more allow of it, looking beyond Jer. 2. 19. Pſal. 119. 120. Pſal. 76. 7. Heb. 12. 28, 29. Amos. 3. 6.

ſecond

ſecond cauſes to the *firſt* and *chief* of all. Say not then that the influence of the ſtarrs and heavenly bodies, or the late glaring *Comets* which appeared, were the cauſes of the *burning feavers* and *malignant diſtempers*, and even of this fatall *Peſtilence*, which ſweeps ſo many into their graves; blame not this or that. Indeed as *Philoſophers* and *Naturaliſts*, you are permitted to ſearch into the *ſecondary* and *phyſicall* cauſes of this dreadfull diſtemper; but as *Chriſtians* and thoſe that live by *higher principles*, you are *firſt* to *look up* unto God, and then *down* into your ſelves, and there behold the *Hand* of the *Lord* ſtretched out againſt you. God is the great Soveraign of the world, the wiſe diſpoſer of the Univerſe, *who doth what ſeemeth good unto him, both in heaven and in earth.* If he ſhall pleaſe to correct and chaſtiſe us, all *naturall* cauſes ſhall give way to his *providence*, which can find us out, though we labour to run never ſo far from it. The *Plague* can climbe over walls, never ſo high and ſtrongly built; it can come in at the windows, though they are made never ſo faſt; it can make it's paſſage through the doors of the houſe, though they are never ſo cloſely lockt and bolted. Labour then to be convinced of this, that there is a *God that judgeth in the earth*, that you are in his hands, and that whatever you ſuffer, is by his diſpoſall. [*I, even I*
Deut. 32. 39. *am he, and there is no God beſides, I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal; neither is there any that can deliver out*
1 Sam. 2. 6. *of my hand.*] [*The Lord killeth and maketh alive, he bringeth down to the grave and bringeth up.*] And it is clear from *Davids Choice*, that the *Peſtilence* is more *remark-*
2 Chron. 21. *ably the Hand of God. Let me fall now into the Hand of*
12, 13. *the Lord* (ſaith he) and by *Davids Seer* it is ſtiled *the ſword of the Lord.* The *preſent Arrows* of the *Almighty* are not like that with which *Ahab* was wounded, which the Story tells us, one ſhot *at a venture*: *No, chance* and *fortune* have nothing to do here. *Apollo* was fitly feigned by the *Poet* to have ſent the *Peſtilence* into the *Græcian Army*: no leſs then a *God* in their Divinity could do it. But I paſs to

The ſecond *Direction*; Be more ſenſible of your *ſins* then of the *puniſhments* that are upon you; be more fear-

full

full of the *Plague* of the *Heart*, then of the *present contagion* that raigns in your ſtreets; be much more troubled in *your ſouls*, to have *committed a ſin* againſt God, then to have it *puniſhed by him*; and for the future, chooſe rather to undergo any *ſuffering* from *men*, then to *diſhonour God*: Avoid that which *grieves the Holy Spirit*, rather then what *troubles* and *afflicts* thy *outward man*. How timorous are we and dejected, at the thoughts of the *Plagues* approaching near us? We have much more reaſon to be *fearfull* of ſin which is the *ſting* of all *judgments*. Weare apt to ſit down and bemoan our ſelves after this manner: Alas! our condition is very ſad, the place we live in is Infected, we ſee whole Families drop away; here Parents are bereaved of their Children, there the Children ſurvive their Parents, but (alas) are left ſhiftleſs to the wide world: Many houſes are ſhut up, and onely ſickneſs and death are *Tenants* there. Neighbours are affraid of one another, and it is not *Trading*, but *poverty* and *want* which bring them to the ſight of one another: How many are *buried*, as it were, while they *live*? and when they are *dead*, they can hardly finde any one to befriend them with a *Grave*. What cryings and complainings are there in our ſtreets? and, if *Gods Hand* ſhould continue on us longer, it will be hard to tell, whether *ſcarcity* or the *Sickneſs* be the worſt *Plagues*. After this ſort do we bemoan our ſelves under Gods judgments; but where is the man among us, that cryes out of his *ſins*, his *ſins*? Where is the *ſpiritual mourner* that lays *iniquity* to his *heart*, and feels a thorow remorſe upon his minde for his rebellion againſt God, for his bidding defiance to Heaven, and for his abuſe of Gods mercies? Where is the man, that beginning to be ſenſible of the *hardneſs* of his *heart*, *ſtrikes* upon it, as if he would *break* it, and *drops down penitentiall tears* that he might ſoften it? Such a man is not eaſily found, ſuch ſeverity on our ſelves is not uſuall. But know this, that nothing is worth a tear, a ſigh, a groan but *Sin*. Turn therefore your grief *this way*, and your ſorrow for *affliction* will not be ſo loud and clamorous. As *Phyſitians* ſtop the blood by *revulſion*, ſtenching it's bleeding in *one* place, by opening

vein in *another*, ſo do you change and divert your ſorrow, turn it quite into another channel: *Humble your ſelves in the ſight of God, lye low before him*, being *caſt down* by the *burden* of *ſin*: Be ſenſible of the *Hand* of God which is *heavy* upon you, but *chiefly* eye *the finger* that
Neh. 9. 33. *points* at thy *Sin*. *God is juſt in all that is brought upon you, for he hath done right, but you have done wickedly.* Gods wrath is but a due puniſhment for your abuſe of his mercy; the overflowing of his anger is but a juſt recompence for your repeated provocations. Inſtead God, but judg and condemn your ſelves. Your deſtruction is of your ſelves, your Plagues are the fruit of your own ways. Had you not been ſtubborn, and obſtinate, and ſinned againſt mercy, you had not felt ſuch *heavy ſtrokes*: but becauſe you would not be drawn with *cords of love*, it was but juſt, the *cords* ſhould be *twiſted into a whip* to *laſh* you into your *duty*. *Common ſickneſſes* would not amend you, you went on and minded not the *ordinary ſummons* of *Mortality*, thoſe it ſeems were not terrible enough. No wonder then, that God takes another courſe, changeth the *rod* into a *Scorpion*, and inſtead of the uſuall diſeaſes, ſends a more *fatall* and *aſtoniſhing diſtemper* which carrys *poyſon* along with it. You may thank your ſelves for all this, for ſin was the pro-
Jer. 2. 17, 19. curing cauſe of it. *Haſt thou not procured this unto thy ſelf, in that thou haſt forſaken the Lord thy God? thy own wickedneſs ſhall correct thee, and thy backſlidings ſhall re-*
Iſa. 59. 2. *prove thee.* And again, [*Our iniquities have ſeparated betwixt us and our God, and our ſins have hid his face from*
Lam. 1. 8. *us that he will not hear.*] [*Jeruſalem hath grievouſly ſinned, therefore ſhe is removed.*] To which let me add that
1 Cor. 11. 30. of the *Apoſtle*, [*For this cauſe*, (namely for your ſins, eſpecially your unchriſtian diviſions, and your prophanation of the Lords Supper,) *many are weak and ſickly among you, and many ſleep.*] Sin is the root of ſuffering; ſtrike therefore at the root firſt, evidence that you are more ſenſible of *ſin* then *ſickneſs* or any other *affliction*, by your *asking* the *pardon* of *ſin chiefly*. It may be ſomewhat remarkable, that the *Pſalmiſt* calls up his ſoul to
Pſal. 103. 3. praiſe God after this manner, [*Bleſs the Lord, O my ſoul,*

and

and forget not all his benefits, who forgiveth all thy iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases.] God first *forgives* and then *heals*: and the *Holy man* is well pleased with this sacred order and method, nay he would have been contented with the *pardon of sin*, though the *infirmities* of his *body* had still *remained*. The light of Gods countenance is far better then the removall of our sicknesses, his favour to our *souls* transcends all worldly ease and refreshment to our *outward man*: Affliction will never hurt us so long as we can *pray* and *believe*, so long as God speaks peace unto our consciences. And therefore in all our distresses, this should be our most ardent request that God would pardon our sins, subdue our wicked natures, and sanctifie us with his *Spirit*; and then though the Cross lies heavy on our bodies and makes our *outward man* decay, yet our *inward man* shall feel joy and comfort, *and our light afflictions, which are but for a moment, shall work for us a far more exceeding and eternall weight of Glory.* And let me commend unto you these three ways, whereby you are further to discover, that you are *truely sensible* of your *Sins*.

The first is a *humble confession*, *hearty bewailing* and *mourning for* your manifold *provocations*. That *Good King* used this remedy, when the *Plague* was broken out, and the *destroying Angel* gone forth to smite, [*Loe, I have sinned and done wickedly.*] You are all to mourn for the crying and raigning sins of this Land, you are to mourn for the sins and enormities of those men, who have not *hearts* to mourn for themselves. Thus *Moses* was grieved sadly for the peoples Idolatry, and most passionately did he interpose in their behalf. *Ezra* and *Nehemiah* most deeply resented the sins of their Nation. You know what Lamentations the *Weeping Prophet* made; you read how *righteous Lot was vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked.* And [*Rivers of water* (saith the *Psalmist*) *run down mine eyes, because men keep not thy Law.*] This was the practice of the *Man after Gods own heart*; and that great *Apostle* could not write to his *Philippians*, without *weeping*, when he made mention of *the enemies of the Cross of Christ*. The ways of the wicked grieve *God* and his *Holy*

2 Sam. 24. 17.

Exod. 32. 30, 31.

2 Pet. 2. 7.

Psal. 119. 136.

Phil. 3. 18.

Spirit, and ſhall they not grieve every *good man?* Mourn then in ſecret for that great pride and haughtineſs, that extortion, cruelty and oppreſſion, that want of brotherly love and Chriſtian communion, that perjury, couzenage and deceit, that wantoneſs and uncleaneſs, that diſobedience and murmuring at our betters, that coldneſs and formality in our religious addreſſes, that neglect of the Ordinances and Inſtitutions of Chriſt, that ſcoffing at Piety and true Devotion; for theſe and many other abominations which this Land is highly guilty of, you are to mourn and weep, even deſiring in a holy paſſion, to weep your eyes out, as being loath to ſee ſuch wickedneſs committed. And yet I have not named a *brace* of *horrid vices*, which this Land is to anſwer for no leſs then for the former, I mean, thoſe common ſins of *drunkeneſs* and *ſwearing*; As for the latter, how prodigiouſly doth it increaſe in our days? And whereas Sr *James* his charge is, [*Above all things my brethren ſwear not,*] and our *Saviour* hath given us the ſame in his excellent Sermon, [*Swear not at all,*] yet are blaſphemous Oaths ſo common and uſuall, as if both thoſe Texts had run thus, [*do dothing but ſwear:*] every ſentence with too many men is ſet off with an oath, Gods *great* and *glorious Name* is uſed and uſurped in the moſt *trifling* and *ridiculous* matters, nay, it is brought into the *obſceneſt*, nay, into the moſt *prophane* and *irreligious* ſpeeches. Gods Name is ſeldom uſed by ſuch wretches in *prayer* and *ſupplication* at the *throne of Grace*, but in bitter curſes and execrations againſt their brethren it is daily abuſed. And is it not juſt with God to viſit *thoſe mens* houſes with the moſt *horrid diſeaſe*, who have ſo often *wiſhed* the *Plague* to their Children, their neareſt relations and companions? It muſt needs grieve every good ſoul, to hear men belch out ſuch *helliſh Rhetorick*. Is it not ſad, that *Chriſtians* ſhould, like thoſe cruell Souldiers, *open Chriſts ſide*, and delight in nothing but *Blood and Wounds?* Sit down awhile and weigh theſe things well, and beſides what I have ſaid, conſider alſo the generall decay of the *practice of Religion*, which ſhould be our *chiefeſt Trade*, but is now *dead:* Conſider the ingratitude and unfruitfulneſs, and (which is ſaddeſt of all) the

James 5. 12.

Mat. 5. 34.

generall

generall ſecurity, inconſiderateneſs, and inſenſibleneſs of the people of the Land, and you will have matter enough for mourning.

But then too, if you ſearch and try your *own* ways and lives, and examine your *own iniquities*, your *proper* and *particular* ſins, you will have yet much more occaſion of mourning: and this muſt be your task likewiſe, *You muſt know every man the Plague of his own heart.* Every *party* of men, I perceive, are ready to lay the fault at anothers door, they clear themſelves, and would not be thought to be the procurers of this *ſad judgment* that is now upon us; but let me adviſe thee, as thou deſireſt pardon of God and peace in thy own conſcience, to look into thy *own* ſoul, and grieve for thoſe ſins which thou eſpieſt *there*, and humbly confeſs, that *thy* iniquities have procured *this* judgment, and heartily endeavour that the affliction may be ſanctified. Which brings me to the *ſecond* way whereby you are to diſcover, that you are *throughly ſenſible* of *ſin*, namely by

Your care and deſire, to have *the affliction ſanctified, rather then removed.* Oh then let all the calamities that befall us, *quicken* and *enliven* our *graces*; let the *rod* make us *take out* our *leſſon* the *better*; let the *weights* make the *clock* go the *faſter*; let the *high* and *bluſtering winds ſpeed* our courſe and ſend us *ſooner* to our *haven*; let the *Rack* which we are upon *make us confeſs our faults*, and even extort from us a godly remorſe: the greater the judgment is, the greater influence let it have upon our hearts and lives. A greater (*temporal*) judgment then the *devouring Plague* cannot enter into our quarters; this therefore, if God ſhall pleaſe to *ſanctifie* to us, may *more effectually* ſhew us our ſins, and teach us righteouſneſs.

Other diſeaſes were but like *ſingle ſhot*, *this* is *chain-ſhot* and *ſweeps* away whole Families; or rather, other ſickneſſes were like *ſmaller Guns* of a *leſſer bore*, but *this* is one of *Heavens Murthering-pieces*, which *carryeth a great way*, and *batters down whole houſes*: the *thickeſt* and *ſtrongeſt walls* cannot *ſtand out* againſt it, the *healthfulleſt conſtitution* is no *bulwark* againſt it, the *art* and *skill* of the *Phyſitian* is not able to grapple with it; *this* de-

vours by *whole-sale*, other diseases but by *piece-meal* and *smaller parcels*. *This*, *this* is a *rod* made on purpose to *scourge* a wicked Nation, *this* is more eminently the *hand* and *stroke* of an angry God, and do we not see how many by *these blows* are made *black* and *blew*? And yet all this may be for our good, for our eternall welfare, the greater the judgment is, the more carefull it may, and should make us to discharge our duty, the more fearfull of sinning against God, and the more humble under the due consideration of Gods wrath and displeasure. *Let us learn obedience*, as our *Blessed Master* did, *by the things which we suffer*. We are *planted by the rivers of water*, even of the water of affliction, let this make us *bring forth our fruit in due season*. Let every one strive to say with the *Psalmist*, [*It is good for me that I have been afflicted.*] O *good rod*, that fetched out the folly which was bound up in my heart! O *good poverty*, that drove me to God with a Petition in my hand, begging the *riches* of his *grace*! O *good reproach* and *affronts*, that humbled me in the dust, and caused me to reflect upon my wicked courses, and made me esteem Gods favour above all things! O *good sickness* and *disease*, that shewed me how vile, poor, and weak a creature I am, how inconsiderable, mean, and empty this world is, and how full and satisfying God is! O *good distemper of body*, that promoted the *welfare* of my *soul*! In a word, O *good afflictions* and *distresses*, that *make me good*! This severe course that God took, was the best way to mend me; the *storms* beat me to *shore*; had I had a *gentler gale* and so sailed along *evenly* and *smoothly*, perhaps I had *split* upon some *fatall Rock*, I had *sunk*, and never seen good day again. I had gone to *hell*, if I had had *Heaven here upon earth*. It is well therefore for me, that I had so many Crosses laid on me; O! it is well that affliction arrested me, else I had gone on still in offending God and my Neighbours. I see now that I *gain* by my *losses*, now I perceive that every *blow* was but a *kinde stroking* of me; every *wound* was a *balsome*, every *judgment* was a *mercy*, and every *affliction* was a *blessing*. Less sorrow would not serve my turn, else I had not felt so much. Therefore welcome affliction, thrice welcome

the

the rod, I will learn for the future how to get all crosses *sanctified* unto me, and to grow *better* by the *worst* condition. I will *hear the rod*, and *who hath appointed it*, I will listen to it's voice, and learn what is my duty by it, for it calls and cryes aloud to me, to prepare for another world, to leave my sins, to repent and really reform. Which leads me to

The *third* way whereby we ought to evidence, that we are *truly sensible of the burthen of our sins*, (namely) by a *thorow reformation of our lives*. For alas! all our *mournings* and *lamentations*, all our *prayers* and *fastings*, all our *sacrifices* and *services*, all our *seeking unto God*, and *calling upon him*, all our *promises* and *resolutions* signifie nothing (as to the removall of judgments) without *holiness of life*, Josh. 7. 12, 13 and the *destroying of the accursed thing from amongst us*. For you must know this, that Praying, and Fasting, and bewailing of our sins, are not the things *ultimatly* designed in Religion, they are in order to something higher, and that is *Reformation of our lives*. *Fasting* is made a duty, because it may be subservient and instrumental to holy meditations, to our nearer converse with God, and abandoning of our lusts. It was one of *Pythagoras* his *Symbols* and advises to his disciples, *To abstain from beans*: the *old Philosopher* (it is thought) did not intend by it a *refraining from that sort of food*, but it was mysticall, (as much of the *Pythagorean Philosophy* is) and signified, that they should be retired, and keep out of *publick offices*; for by *beans* the Magistrates were chosen in some parts of *Greece*; or, perhapson *another account*, (as some learned men have conjectured) *Continence* and *Chastity* were aimed at in that Law of *Abstinence*. Sure I am, that in the *Christian Philosophy*, *Fasting* is subordinate to a *higher thing*: and as it should put us in minde to *abstain from fleshly lusts*, so it is very apt in some bodies to promote piety and devotion, and therefore it is to be used to such an end as that. So likewise for *Prayer* and *Confessing of our sins*, they are intended to render us more holy and religious, to compose our thoughts, to elevate our souls to God, and that we may breath out the very secrets of our hearts before him. 'Tis pity therefore, that *these duties* should

ſhould be ſeparated from their great *end* and deſign; Nay, praying, and faſting, and ſeeking of God without *Reformation*, are but a taking of Gods name in vain, and a very mocking of him; ſo that when we ſeem to debaſe our ſelves, and appear before God in all poſtures of humiliation, when we *confeſs* ſin and *pray* againſt it, and yet *live* in the *love* and *practice* of it; we do inſtead of *averting* Gods judgments, *pull* them *down* upon us, and continue them longer amongſt us. Be perſwaded therefore to reform your lives, and turn unto God in good earneſt; do not onely *pray* but *practice*, as thoſe Mariners who *cryed every man to his God*, and withall, *caſt Jonah over-board*. Caſt out ſin, puniſh ſinners, and then *the ſtorm will ceaſe*. Let every one reform *himſelf*, and endeavour to reform thoſe that are *his charge*; following the example of that Joſh. 24. 15. *Holy man*, who thus reſolved, [*As for me, I and my houſe will ſerve the Lord.*] Like unto which was the reſolu- Eſther 4. 16. tion of that *vertuous Woman*, [*I and my maidens will faſt and pray.*] So let every Maſter and Miſtreſs of a Family ſay, I will by Gods help ſee to *my charge*, I will reform *at home*. This will be the moſt proper and compendious way to work a thorow amendment in the *whole Nation*, thus the good work will go on apace and come to perfection.

And to promote this *reformation*, let me ſuggeſt theſe enſuing truths unto you:

1. Deliverance and mercy is promiſed to a Nation upon *this condition* and upon *no other*. Thus runs that anſwer 2 Chron. 7. of the Lord to *Solomon*, [*If I ſhut up heaven that there be* 13, 14. *no rain, or if I command the locuſts to devour the land, or if I ſend peſtilence among my people; If my people which are called by my name, ſhall humble themſelves and pray, and ſeek my face, and turn from their wicked ways: then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their ſin, and will heal their land.*] Thus likewiſe you finde it in that word Jer. 18. 7, 8. of the Lord to *Jeremiah*, [*At what inſtant I ſhall ſpeak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to deſtroy it; if that nation againſt whom I have pronounced, turn from their evill, I will repent of the evill that I thought to do unto them.*] But

2. Pu

2. Put the case that the *Plague* be *removed*, and your *sins still remain*; then I must tell you, that *such a removal is not a mercy*, for God never *takes away* his *anger* till you *reform*. He often times indeed leaves a Nation and persons to themselves and to their own sinfull wills and ways: But alas! there is no greater *punishment* then *this*, and no plainer sign of Gods displeasure. It is sad when God speaks unto a Land as he did of old to *Judah*, [*Ah sinfull Nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evill doers, children that are corrupters, they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward.*] And then it follows, [*Why should you be stricken any more? you will revolt more and more, the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint*, &c.] When the heaviest *strokes* and *Plagues*, when the greatest judgments and calamities will not amend a people, then God gives them over; as *Physitians*, when their *patients* are past recovery, permit them any thing. Isa. 1. 4, 5.

3. *Punishments removed* and *your sins still remaining*, do sadly portend a heavyer judgment for the *future*, either upon your bodies or your souls, either in *this* or the *other world*. When God took away the *Plagues* from *Pharaoh*, he sent *hardness of heart*. Nay, God may remove the *Plague* and reserve you for *Hell*, and then you cannot say your case is mended. Thus every ways it is your interest to *reform* and break off your sins by repentance. Every person is ingaged in his place and capacity to appear against Vice, and to endeavour the extirpation of it; but here the *Magistrate* in a speciall manner is concerned, who is to see, that all *Infected* persons be *shut up*. The *Leper* under the Law was *to dwell alone without the camp*, that he might not converse with those that were *whole*: now I have told you, that *Sin* is the *worst of Plagues and Leprosies*. You therefore that are in publick places and Offices are to *set a watch* over *notorious sinners*, that they *go not abroad* to *infect others*: if they *break out* you may *shoot* at them; if sinners will be *bold* and *daring*, you are bound to unsheath the *Sword* of *Justice* and *strike* at them; as indeed there are a sort of hardned sinners that stare *Justice* in the *face*, and say she is *blinde*,

and laugh at her *Sword*, and make their brag that they *never felt* the *edge* of it. Here you will do well to make them experience how *ſharp* it is; that *others* too beholding the puniſhment inflicted on *them*, may not preſume to glory in their ſhame. They commonly ſay, that thoſe who are *infected long to infect others*; it is certainly true of the *contagion of ſin*; wicked men cannot be content to diſhonour God *themſelves*, but they invite and inveigle others to do ſo too. Look well to theſe *peſtilent fellows*, that they may not *ſpread the contagion*, and *corrupt others*, though they *would*. And theſe are the ways and methods whereby we are to diſcover how *ſenſible* we are of the great ſins and provocations of a Nation.

The *third Direction* for our behaviour in theſe ſad and calamitous times is, that by *Faith* and *Patience* we compoſe our minds and ſubmit *our wills* unto *Gods* in whatſoever he ſhall be pleaſed to inflict upon us. We muſt *bear the indignation of the Lord*, and reſign our ſelves to his diſpoſall, not murmuring at *his* choice for us, but contentedly tarrying his time and leiſure. We are *hedged in*, (ſo the *Scripture* expreſſes affliction) we muſt not impatiently *leap over this hedg*, nor *make a gap* in it. There was a certain offender doubted that he ſhould be poyſoned by *Caligula*, and ſo drunk off a Counter-poyſon to preſerve and fortifie himſelf; but the *Emperour* took the man up very ſmartly in theſe words, *Antidotum adverſus Cæſarem?* What! does he think to take any Antidote againſt the *fatall Doſe* which *Cæſars* hand ſhall give him? Methinks *God* ſpeaks to us in ſome ſuch language; What? ſhall *poor mortalls* think to *controll* me? can they *prevent* that affliction which I have *allotted* them? When I have brought them into ſtraits, can they by their own power extricate themſelves out of them? It would better become them to ſit down patiently, and ſhake of that baſe ſpirit of fearfulneſs and unwillingneſs to bear the yoak. The *Thracians* (they ſay) when the Sun burns hot upon them, and ſo when it thunders and lightens, out of a kinde of revenge, ſhoot up their Arrows againſt Heaven. And we read, that upon *pouring out* of one of the *Vials*, *men were ſcorched with great heat, and blaſphemed the name of God*, which

Lam. 3. 7.

Rev. 16. 9.

which had power over the Plagues. This is the guiſe of ſome peevish and angry mortals; but if thou call'ſt thy ſelf a *Chriſtian*, thou art obliged to be of *another ſpirit*, undergoing with patience and chearfulneſs whatever thy Heavenly Father ſhall inflict upon thee. [*Let not your hearts be troubled*, (ſaid our *Saviour* to his ſorrowfull Diſciples) *believe in God, believe alſo in me.*] 'Tis *Faith* that muſt uphold thee and ſupport thy ſpirits, make God thy *buckler* and *ſtrength*, thy *Rock* and *place of refuge*; truſt in Him *now* or *never*. It is he *that muſt give us help from trouble, for vain is the help of man.* Do as *David* in his diſtreſs at *Ziglag*, *Encourage thy ſelf in the Lord thy God.* His Providence rules the world, there is not a Sparrow falls to the ground without his permiſſion, *his eyes run thorow the whole earth*, he ſees and *knows thy ſoul in adverſity*; thou perhaps ſitteſt ſolitary, and haſt no company to viſit thee, thou weepeſt alone in a dark corner, and thy caſe is not known to the world, but *God* takes notice of thee, his *Eye* is towards thee. But that is not all, thou haſt his *Ear* too; thou art aſſured of this, as well as of that other Prerogative, from the words of the *Pſalmiſt*, [*The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry.*] And in another place where this *Holy King* had laid open his ſad and lamentable condition, he at laſt concludes thus, [*Lord, all my deſire is before thee, and my groaning is not hid from thee.*] Thou haſt Gods *Heart* too; he pitys thy condition, his bowels yearn towards thee, he is *afflicted in all thy affliction*; he hath the pity of a *tender Father*: but becauſe *love* and *affection* and *kinde-heartedneſs* is thought to lodg moſt of all in the *other Parent*, therefore he tells us by his *Prophet*, that he hath the *love* of an indulgent *mother towards her ſucking childe*, whom ſhe then tends upon with the greateſt care and compaſſion when ſhe ſees it is *drooping* and *ſickly*. But the *mother* may prove *unnaturall* and abate of her affection and kindneſs to her little Infant, *Yet will I not forget thee*, ſaith the Lord. [*When my father and my mother forſake me, then the Lord will take me up.*] That was the holy confidence and aſſurance which the diſtreſſed *Pſalmiſt* had of Gods mercy and compaſſion towards him. And it was an ex-

John 14. 1.

Pſal. 60. 11.

Pſal. 34. 15.

Pſal. 38. 9.

Iſa. 49. 15.

Pſal. 27. 10.

cellent contrivance of Divine Wisdome to this very purpose, that *Christ* should assume our nature, for hereby he
Heb. 4. 15, 16. is become such *a High-priest as can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities.* Remarkable are those words in St *Matthews* Gospel, taken out of the Prophesie of *Isaiah*
Mat. 8. 17. concerning Christ, [*Himself took our infirmities, and bare*
Isa. 53. 4. *our sicknesses,*] yet was he not *personally* troubled with any disease, but when he came to any sick and diseased wretches his manner was, by *pity* and *sympathy* to afflict himself with their sicknesses; as when he visited *Lazarus*, both *alive* and in the *grave*: thus he bears our sicknesses and distempers by a fellow-feeling and compassion. And then also thou hast Gods *Arm* under thee, to support thee in thy affliction; thy neighbours may *see* thee and *listen* to thy sad complaints, and *pity* thy sadder condition, but they cannot help thee to *bear* thy burthen; nay, they oftentimes *augment* affliction by *compassionating* it: but thy God is present with thee to succour thee, *he will not suffer*
1 Cor. 10. 13. *thee to be tempted above what thou art able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that thou mayst be able*
Psal. 37. 24. *to bear it. Though thou fallest, thou shalt not be utterly cast down, for the Lord upholdeth thee with his Hand.* Lastly, Gods *Hand* is over thee to *act* for thee, and in due time to *deliver* thee out of thy afflictions: to this purpose
Psal. 91. 15. is that promise made to every righteous man, [*He shall call upon me and I will answer him, I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honour him.*] Which promise is the more remarkable at *this season*, because it is the conclusion of that *Psalm* which treats wholly of Gods Providence over his children in the time of the *Pestilence.* In short then, thou hast Gods *Eye* to take notice of thee, Gods *Ear* to hear thee, Gods *Heart* to pity thee, and Gods *Hand* and *Arm* to support and deliver thee; thou hast promises to live upon, which cannot be taken from thee, *great and precious promises*; the Angels are promised as thy life-guard to defend thee and pitch their tents about
Mat. 6. 33. thee; upon condition, that thou *seekest first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, all these* temporall *things* which may serve for thy necessity *shall be added unto thee*;
Psal. 34. 9. if thou *feares God, there shall be no want to thee*; *all things*

shall

ſhall work together for thy good; the Lord will be to thee a ſun and a ſhield, the Lord will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from thee, if thou walkeſt uprightly. And the whole *Ninety firſt Pſalm* is full fraught with Promiſes, which (as I have intimated already) may ſerve thee as Cordials to chear thee under the preſent *Viſitation*: Often think of, and ſupport thy ſelf with theſe props of comfort, often reſort to theſe wells of ſalvation, often read over theſe large expreſſions of love and compaſſion, place thy whole truſt and affiance in God the author of theſe priviledges, and the onely ſanctuary of thy ſoul: truſt in Him and deſpiſe this vain world, whoſe pleaſures are counterfeit and imaginary, whoſe enjoyments are momentany and unſatisfactory. *Turn about* this *Globe* often and view it's ſeverall parts; ſurvey it but narrowly, and that's enough to bring thee out of love with it, and to make thee deſire after *Heaven*, that *Land of Promiſe*. The *Americans* point to certain great hills, and tell us there it is that they ſhall be happy hereafter, there they ſhall wander in fine fields, take their pleaſures in brave Orchards and goodly Gardens, and there dance and be merry. Poor ſouls! do theſe *ſenſuall* expectations, theſe *ridiculous* ſopperies and deluſions chear them, and ſhall not *certain joys*, *well-grounded hopes* and *reall promiſes* make *Chriſtians* live chearfully, and ſmooth their brows in the greateſt diſtreſſes and calamities? Look up then by a ſteady *Faith*: This is the *Chriſtian Teleſcope*, hereby thou mayſt *diſcover* and *plainly diſcern* the joys of *Heaven* and the glory of that *other world*: and having once taken a view of that *Celeſtiall Canaan*, thy ſoul will be raviſhed with it, thy thoughts will be wholly placed upon it's excellencies, and thou wilt breath out thy longings in ſuch language as this, *Oh take me up to thee, or come thou down to me*: thou wilt eaſily deſie ſufferings, over-look the croſs, truſt God for to morrow and all thy life, thou wilt ſing ſweetly under the greateſt diſcouragements, and in the cloſeſt confinements thou wilt content thy ſelf with this, that thou art a Kings Son and Heir to a Crown, though *now* thou art poor and deſpiſed, thou wilt give looſers leave to laugh at thee, and quietly ſuffer Pſal. 84. 11.

the Bedlam-world to rage at will, thou wilt make thy ſelf merry with the *Feaſt of a good Conſcience*, though thy *dyet* be never ſo *courſe*; thou wilt thank God for *any thing*, becauſe thou deſerveſt *nothing*, thou wilt bear thy *preſent evils* with expectation of the *promiſed good*, and in all thy diſaſters thou wilt comfort thy ſelf that *Heaven* will make
Habak. 2. 4. amends for all. *The juſt ſhall live by faith*, ſaid the *Lord* to *Habakkuk*: and mark how this *Prophet* lived by it,
Habak. 3 17, 18, [*Although the figtree ſhall not bloſſom, neither ſhall fruit be in the vines, the labour of the olive ſhall faile, and the fields ſhall yield no meat; the flock ſhall be cut off from the fold, and there ſhall be no herd in the ſtalls; yet I will rejoyce in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my ſalvation; the Lord God is my ſtrength*, &c.] When all things both for *neceſſity* and *delight* failed him, he was able to *ſubſiſt* by a *living faith*, and this is that by which *every* holy man muſt *live* and hold up in the world. And as the juſt muſt *live by faith*, ſo he muſt *dye* by it too, by this he will be rendered willing to depart the world, and bid his friends farewell, by this he may attain to old *Simeon*'s *Nunc dimittis*, [*Now letteſt thou thy ſervant depart in peace:*] by this *eye* of *faith* he may look up to Heaven, and with St *Stephen*, *Behold Chriſt ſitting at the right hand of God*, reaching out his arms to embrace him and take him to himſelf. Thus do thou act faith, and thou mayſt live comfortably in an unkind world, thou mayſt *bear up* againſt all the *ſtorms* that are abroad; in the abſence of things *temporall* live on thoſe that are *ſpirituall* and *eternall*; open the *eye* of *faith* but *wide*, and thou ſhalt *ſee enough* to comfort thee. Have you not read of *Elijah*, how that he was weary (poor man) in the wilderneſs, and lay down under the Juniper tree, complaining that he had no meat to eat, and therefore deſired God to take away his life? but the diſtreſſed Prophet took his reſt, roſe up again and look'd about him, and behold! a *cake* and a *cruſe* of *water*, and ſo he eat and drank once and again, and he went in the ſtrength of it fourty days and nights. *Lye down* and *repoſe* thy ſelf by *faith* and *patience*, and God will provide for thee. Sometimes *the water is ſpent in the bottle*, our worldly comforts are drained from

us,

us, and then we are apt with *Hagar* to ſit down, and lift up our voices and *weep*, as if we would fill the bottle again; we cry and take on ſadly, but if it ſhall pleaſe God to *ſpeak to us from heaven* and *open our eyes*, we may diſcover a *well of water* to fill the *bottle*; ſo that oftentimes we have the *ſame* and *greater* comforts too. Hold out therefore Faith and Patience, let us dry up our immoderate *tears*, which do but ſpoil our *ſight*, and hinder us from *ſeeing* our happineſs, which we may be partakers of even in the greateſt ſtraits and neceſſities.

The next *Direction* which may be ſerviceable unto us in theſe times of affliction is, that we labour to *contract our deſires* as to the enjoyments of this life, and *prize Gods bleſſing* above all. Whoever thou art, be of a *narrow* ſoul to the *world*, but *enlarge* it towards *God*: down with thy *great ſail*, it is *too big* for thy *ſmall veſſell*, and it will make it *topple over*; take a *peg lower*, leſt you *crack*; *ſwell* not ſo *big* leſt you *burſt aſunder*; A *little* would ſerve our turns, if we would but *curb* our laviſh wiſhes, and *leſſen* our appetites. [*A mans life conſiſteth not in the abundance of the things which he poſſeſſeth,*] which our *Saviour* gives as the reaſon of his foregoing Caution, *viz.* [*Take heed, and beware of covetouſnes.*] Which warning is backt by the Parable of the *Rich man* who *pulled down his barns to ſet up greater*; whereas the *fool* (as he is there called) might have ſaved himſelf the labour of *enlarging his barns*, by *contracting his covetous deſires*. By this excellent art of *abating* our extravagant appetites, and by looking up unto *God* the authour of all we have, we may moſt comfortably deport our ſelves in the world. In that *Song* of *Moſes*, where he reckons up the ſundry mercies of God to the *Iſraelites*, it is ſaid that God made them *to ſuck honey out of the Rock, and oyl out of the flinty rock*. It was but *water* (and well ſo) that they received from the rock; this was a mercy, if not a miracle, for they might rather have expected that *fire* ſhould have been ſtruck out of the *rock of flint* then *water*. I, but *meer water* with *Gods bleſſing* and *a thankfull heart* is *honey* and *oyl*, and *this oyl*, like that of the *Widows*, by the ſame *bleſſing* ſhall be *increaſed* unto us. See then that thou

Luke. 12. 15.

Deut. 32. 13.

thou beeſt content with thy condition, though it be never ſo poor, ſit down and *give thanks* though thou haſt never ſo little, draw thy deſires into a narrow compaſs, but enlarge thy heart in praiſing of God. The *Children* that *refuſed* the portion and proviſion of the *Kings* meat, and fed on *pulſe and water* were *fatter* and *fairer* then all thoſe which did eat of the *Kings food*. You ſee what *Gods bleſſing* could effect with the *courſeſt fare*; and it can do as much in the *want* of all food. If God takes away our meat he can take away our ſtomachs alſo, as a *Holy Woman* and *Martyr* once comforted her ſelf. One way or other Gods Providence will ſuſtain us *here*, and ſee that we be recompenſed *hereafter*. Poor *Lazarus* lay at the *Rich mans* Gate, craving but the *crumbs that fell from his table*, but *thoſe*, even *thoſe* were denyed him: had the *Churl* come out and ſeen him lying before his houſe, it is likely he would have ſet his *dogs* upon him, to worry the *poor cripple*; but thoſe bruits belike were friendly to him, and *licked his ſores*; he received a kindneſs from the *dogs*, when he could have none from their *Maſter*. But ſtay awhile, and you ſhall ſee *Lazarus* his condition much mended; his *ſoul* is carried hence by a convoy of *good Angels*, and the *Rich mans affrighted ghoſt* is ſnatched away by a black guard of *Devils*. *Lazarus* was not thought worthy to *lye under the Rich mans table*, but now he is taken into *Abrahams boſom*. So true is that of the *Sweet Singer of Iſrael*,

Dan. 1. 12, 13.

Pſal. 37. 37, 38. [*Mark the perfect man and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace: but the tranſgreſſours ſhall be deſtroyed together; the end of the wicked ſhall be cut off.*]

Another duty that I muſt *direct* you unto, and deſire you to be fervent in, is *Seeking of God by Prayer*. This is ſeaſonable at all times, but *now* more eſpecially *in the needfull time of trouble*. When ſhould we with greater importunity make our addreſſes at the Throne of Grace, then when we are in the *jaws of death*, and are like to be *ſwallowed up* hourly? When thou canſt do nothing elſe, thou mayſt *pray* and *cry mightily unto God* in behalf of this diſtreſſed Land. Oh! labour to extort mercy from God

God by a holy violence, do thou (with *Moſes*) *ſtand in the gap, and turn away Gods wrath*; take this *holy cenſer of Prayer*, and (with *Aaron*) *ſtand between the living and the dead*. *God is our refuge and ſtrength, a very preſent help in time of trouble.* Pſal. 46. 1. *And to God the Lord belong the iſſues from death.* Pſal. 68. 20. To him therefore do thou lift up thy ſoul; begging earneſtly that He would fit thee for trouble, ſorrow and ſickneſs, that he would *ſtrengthen thee upon the bed of languiſhing, and make all thy bed in thy ſickneſs*; (then be ſure 'twill be *ſoft* and *eaſie*) that he would *remove his ſtroke* (or Plague) *away from thee*, and from the place where thou liveſt. Pſal. 41. 3. Pſal. 39. 10. *Is any among you afflicted? let him pray.* James 5. 13. This is St *James* his *Catholicon* or *Univerſall remedy*, this is that *powerfull key* which heretofore hath *opened* the *windows* of *heaven*, and made a *paſſage* from the *belly* of the *whale*, and this is the *key* which ſtill *opens* the *doors* of *mercy*. *Open* therefore with Prayer in the *morning*, and *ſhut up* with it in the *evening*; have frequent recourſe *to him that heareth prayers*, make thy complaint to God when none elſe will hear it, ſend up ſtrong crys and groans to Heaven; and be ſure to remember this, that 'tis not *fluency* but *fervency*, 'tis not *eloquence* but *importunity*, 'tis not *many words* but the *Spirit* which God moſt minds and will anſwer thee for. To *Supplication* thou muſt add *Thanksgiving*: bleſs God therefore for his ſparing *thee* and *this Land* ſo long, bleſs God this *ſad ſeaſon* that thou enjoyeſt *any mercy*: it is Gods goodneſs, patience and long ſufferance that we are engaged unto for ſo *long* a *reſpite* and *freedom* from the *Peſtilence*. It is *many years* ſince this *noiſome diſeaſe* hath made any conſiderable inroads upon us; and now that it is broken out amongſt us, thoſe of you (my Beloved) who by *divine providence* watching over you, are wholly ſhielded and ſecured from this *grievous Plague* and *Sickneſs*, ſo that it neither touches you nor your Relations; thoſe of you (I ſay) are more eſpecially bound to praiſe and magnifie the ſingular goodneſs of God. And you have *all of you without diſtinction* abundant cauſe to praiſe and extoll the Lord of heaven and earth, that though the *Plague* walks through your ſtreets, and poverty like its

companion goes along with it, yet he hath not wholly taken away his mercies from you. The *generality* of persons in this place are as healthfull *now* as heretofore. The *ſtaff of bread* is not *broken*. *God crowns the year with his goodneſs, and makes his paths drop fatneſs.* But be thy caſe never ſo mean, be thou and thine reduced to never ſo great ſtraits, be thy condition worſe then I can expreſs, thou haſt ſtill reaſon to *praiſe God*. *He hath not dealt with thee after thy ſins, nor rewarded thee according to thy iniquities.* Thou art not worthy of the *leaſt* mercy, thou deſerveſt nothing at Gods hands but *Hell*; and therefore thank God heartily that he hath not cruſhed thee to pieces, and cauſed *the pit to ſhut its mouth upon thee.*

Pſal 103.10.

The *next* thing I would commend unto you for the upholding of your ſpirits in ſad times is, that (in imitation of the beſt and holieſt ſervants of God) you would *make uſe of former experiences*. *Remember the days of old*, look back and conſult the mercies you have received heretofore. Do you not obſerve, that in this time of *Sickneſs* perſons ask after the *old Plague-water*, the *antient Antidotes* and *Electuaries* uſed in *former* years of *Contagion*? Let us in like manner call to minde thoſe *former gracious Inſtances* and *Experiments* of Gods loving kindneſs to us. *Oh taſte and ſee that God is good*: Labour to regain that excellent *taſte* and *relliſh* which you once had upon your ſouls. [*They that know thy name will put their truſt in thee,*] ſaith the *Pſalmiſt*. Your experimentall knowledg and obſervation of divine goodneſs in *times paſt* ſhould be uſed as an argument to induce you to truſt in God for the *future*. So it was in St *Pauls Logick*, [*Who delivered us from ſo great a death, and doth deliver, in whom we truſt that he will yet deliver us.*] As there are ſome who have nothing to live upon theſe ſad times but what they have laid up before; ſo let me deſire you in *another* and *better ſenſe* to *ſpend now upon the ſtock*, that is, remember how *good God* hath been to you, and do not look upon the mercies already received, as ſo many ſad *omens* and forerunners of your ruine, but rather as pledges and earneſts of *greater* bleſſings.

Pſal, 9. 10.

2 Cor. 1. 10.

And

And as you muſt *look backward* unto Gods *former mercies*, ſo *look forward*, and *prepare* for *further afflictions*. Lay in yet a *larger ſtock*, thou wilt have need of it *all* when thou art *ſick* and in *ſorrow*: Provide then for affliction by meditating on it *before hand*, make it *now* familiar to thy thoughts, and ſo it will be entertained with contentment when it comes. Ask thy ſelf thus, How ſhould I bear it, if God ſhould caſt me on a bed of ſickneſs? What if I ſhould go down the wind, if my credit ſhould crack and my friends fail me? What if God ſhould take all my outward enjoyments from me, ſtripping me naked and turning me ſo into the wide world? I have received *good things* at Gods hand, how ſhall I do to receive *evill things*? Thus by putting *theſe demands* to thy own ſoul, and by converſing (as it were) with the croſs, thou doeſt *take* it up by little and little, thou boweſt thy neck, and fitteſt it for the yoak. Oh then fail not to *parly* thus with affliction *at a diſtance*; for thou knoweſt not how ſoon it may *enter thy doors*, *break into* thy family, and *lodg* with *thee* and *thine* whether thou wilt or no. Prepare for Gods hand, provide for thy departure, think that thou heareſt thoſe words ſpoken to thee which were once to *Hezekiah*, [*Set thy houſe in order, for thou muſt dye*:] Be not afraid to take *Death* by the *cold hand*, and go along with him, and *lye down in the duſt*. Iſa. 38. 1.

Being *prepared* for the *worſt* thou needeſt not fear any thing. *Walk in Gods ways*, and they will be thy *guard* and *ſecurity*, God will *protect* thee in *doing his work*. *Truſt in the Lord and do good, ſo ſhalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou ſhalt be fed. Wait on the Lord and keep his way, and he ſhall exalt thee to inherit the Land: He ſhall give his Angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways.* But then *thy ways* muſt be *Gods ways*, or elſe that *promiſe of being in the cuſtody of Angels* doth not concern *thee*. Be about thy *Maſters buſineſs*, and he will look to thy *maintenance*. And beſide our *general Calling* as we are *Chriſtians*, there are *particular Callings and Places*, in which we are ſet and muſt ſerve our Maſter in, [*Let every man abide in the ſame calling wherein he was called.*] This was an *Apoſtolical* rule and command, and it holds Pſal. 37. 3, 34. Pſal. 91. 11. 1 Cor. 7. 20.

row as well as in St *Pauls* time; for we *ſerve God* by being diligent in our *ſecular affairs*, by *faithfulneſs* in our *ſeveral vocations* and *profeſſions*. The *Magiſtrate* is to keep his ſtation, and act in that *higher ſphear* in which God hath ſet him; this will yield him comfort when God ſhall pleaſe to call for him hence, that he is found doing his *Lords work*. The *Miniſter* hath his place and peculiar calling, and it will be well for him to be found in the faithfull diſcharge of *it*: as that good Biſhop made anſwer, when he was deſired once to return home as he was going to Preach, *It beſt becomes a Biſhop to dye Preaching*. And it was the like pious wiſh of St *Auguſtine*, that when *Chriſt* ſhould come, he might be found either *Praying* or *Preaching*. The *Tradeſman* too, and every one whom God hath ſet in any lawful employment for the uſe of men muſt be diligent in it; and as it is a known Maxime amongſt them, [*Keep your ſhops, and your ſhops will keep you,*] ſo it is true in a higher ſenſe, if they be careful in their callings, that carefulneſs will prove their *guard* and *protection*. In a word, every one in his own *Orb* wherein Divine Providence hath placed him, muſt *move*, *ſhine* and *act* with all his might. This is *Chriſtianity*, and this will convey a bleſſing unto thee. *Moſes* put his hand into his boſom, and when he took it out, it was leprous as ſnow. Let me apply it thus, the *ſloathful man* that (as *Solomon* ſets him forth) *hideth his hand in his boſom*, may juſtly fear that ſome *contagious diſeaſe*, ſome *Plague* may light upon him. This life is a *warfare*, we are like to meet with many *hardſhips* and *dangers*, many a *bruſh* and *skirmiſh*; but as we are *ſpiritual ſouldiers* we muſt not dare to *leave our ſtation*, or *quit* the *ground* our *great General* hath ſet us in. No, no, if we are *ſhot* in *Gods ſervice* we can not ſuffer, if we are *taken off* by the *Arrows of the Almighty*, our end will be unſpeakably comfortable; if we are ſnatched away with the *common calamity*, even then we are ſafe and ſecure. *The righteous periſheth*, ſaith the *Prophet*, (he may ſeem in the eye of man to fare very ill, but he adds) *The righteous is taken away from the evil to come, he ſhall enter into peace.* [*Come my people, enter thou into thy Chambers and ſhut thy doors about thee; hide thy ſelf as it were for a little*

B. *Jewel.*

Iſa. 57. 1, 2.

Iſa. 26. 20.

little moment untill the indignation be over-paſt.] The *deluge* is approaching, and ſo the righteous are taken into the *Ark*, they are locked up ſafe there, and the floud ſhall not come nigh them. The *ſtorm* is coming, and ſo the *Bees* haſten to their *hive*. God plucks his out of the fire, and it is no wonder, if in *that plucking* they have a little *wrench* and *pain*; ſuch *pain* is the greateſt *courteſie*, for they are ſnatched from future dangers, and ſecured from national calamities; *No evill ſhall befall them, no Plague ſhall come nigh their dwelling*, no *Plague* that hath *evil* with it; they ſhall be freed from whatſoever there is of judgment in the ſtroke. There was a great deal of difference between the death of *Sampſon* and the *Philiſtines*, though they periſhed with the *fall* of the *ſame houſe*. Gods children may dye of the Plague, but that Plague is not ſent as *a curſe* but a *bleſſing*, for it improves their graces, prepares them for heaven and inhanſes their reward, it carrys them from an evil and unkind world to the company of Saints and Angels, from a Priſon to a Palace, from a wilderneſs to a Paradiſe, from a *valley* of tears to a *mount* of joy. Thus it ſhall go well with thee (oh Chriſtian) whatſoever ſort of death thou meeteſt with, the *Bell* that *tolls for thee* is but to call thee to the *Church triumphant*; thy friends that weep, if they conſider aright what they do, grieve and lament that *they cannot go along with thee*; and thou mayſt be comforted by that revenge which is done upon death, [*Oh death I will be thy Plagues, oh grave I will be thy deſtruction.*] Hoſ. 13. 14.

But then remember on the other ſide, how ſad and miſerable it is to dye in the commiſſion of ſin; and are there not many perſons that inſtead of being employed in Gods work, are wholly taken up with the Devils, and go out of the world in that employment? Have you not heard of ſome that have *ſwom* out of the world in *exceſſive drink*, they being (in the worſt ſenſe of all) *dead drunk*? Was not *Senacherib* ſlain when he was worſhipping in the houſe of *Niſroch* his god? Have not ſome wretches been ſeized on and apprehended by death, in the very acts of uncleanneſs and looſe debauchery? How ſad muſt their condition be which thus leave *this* world and appear in *another*? How ſcared and affrighted are their ſouls in their entrance into 2 Kings 19. 37.

that other ſtate? This ſhould make all perſons, eſpecially now at this ſeaſon, to be careful over their ways, that Gods judgments may not arreſt them in the commiſſion of ſin, and ſo their caſe be unſpeakably forlorn: this ſhould make us all faithful in our general and particular callings, that our Lord when he comes may find us doing his will, and then *in what maner ſoever* he comes we ſhall be ſafe.

More particularly, to reach thy caſe, whoſoever thou art that haſt or ſhalt have *the hand* of *God* upon thy body, and ſo art *ſhut up* and hindred from commerce with the world, my *Direction* to thee is, that thou converſe more immediatly with *God*, when thou art kept from the ſociety of *men*. Thou art *Gods priſoner*: He hath ſhut thee up, and though thou art never ſo cloſely confined, he can *let in* his *Holy Spirit* to thee, and *let out* thy *fervent prayers* to Him. *Chriſt Jeſus* will come and *viſit* thee when thou art *alone*, when lovers and friends ſtand aloof off, and thy neareſt relations hide themſelves. This is an unſpeakable happineſs, that thou haſt a God to go to, who is a rock and place of refuge, who will never fail thoſe that put their truſt in him. When, like *Daniel*, thou art ſhut up, make thy prayers to God, ſpread thy ſupplications before him, for thou art not out of Gods hearing. In the want of all *temporal* enjoyments, ſeek after thoſe which are *divine* and *heavenly*. Let the ſenſe and feeling of Gods love to thee, and the comfortable witneſs of thy own conſcience, make thee joyful in the midſt of all diſcouragements. Let it not trouble thee, that thou art ſeparated from thy friends and acquaintance. It is not long before we muſt all take leave one of another, and be *ſhut up* in our *Coffins*. The enjoyments of this world cannot long endure, and therefore dote not ſo upon them, as to be utterly dejected when thou art cut ſhort of them: if thou art impriſoned by Providence, undergo thy reſtraint patiently, and do not, like *children*, *cry to go abroad*. If thou converſeſt with God and thy own heart, thou wilt not be ſo eager after other company.

Another *Direction* (but more large) is this, that in this time of danger you uſe ſuch means and ſecondary helps as Providence hath approved of, but that you do not *truſt* in them.

them. We must not be disobedient to Gods order and appointment, what he hath provided we may lawfully make use of, but then we must beg a *blessing* of God and leave the success to him. King *Asa* did otherwise and was blamed for it, namely, that *when he was diseased he sought not to the Lord, but to physitians.* Thou mayst repair to the Physitian, but remember that thou *seekest to God first* and *beggest* his *blessing chiefly*; for it is only under the conduct of *Divine Providence*, that those *outward means* and *supplies*, helps and *medicines* do take effect. 2 Chron. 16. 12.

And so likewise if you have any thoughts of *changing your place*, and *flying* from the danger, be sure to *take God along with you.* This the very *Heathens* were carefull of, who thought themselves safe where ever they journeyed, so they carried their *gods* along with them.

Thus they tell us of *Æneas*, that when *Troy* was on fire, he was no less mindful of rescuing his *houshold gods*, then of bringing away his *old decrepid father* on his back; you must think he reckoned so *sacred* and *venerable* a *load* as his best *protection*, and that which would serve to *lighten* his future calamities. And shall I add what some have conjectured concerning *Rachels* stealing her Fathers Images, *viz.* That she was somewhat infected with the Idolatry of *Labans* family, and so being to leave *Padan-Aram*, she would rather *rob* her *Father* then go without those little *Moveable* and *Guardian gods.* As for thee, if thou intendest to shift thy place, forget not to take the *God of thy fathers* along with thee, even the *great God of heaven and earth.* Be sure that thou flyest not away from the Town where Infection is, that thou mayst sin *more securely* in another place: remember God sees thee, and can send his *flying arrows* after thee, though thou doest immure thy self never so closely. Rather make thy peace with God, and get the *blood* of *Jesus* the *Lamb of God sprinkled upon thy soul*, that so the *destroying Angel* may *pass over* thee: where ever thou art make the *most High* thy confidence, so thou shalt be best secured. [*Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose minde is stayed on thee, because he trusted in thee. Trust ye in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.*] Isa. 26. 3, 4.

But

But though thou art *free thy ſelf*, by Gods great goodneſs, from the *grievous diſtemper*, yet forget not to *ſympathize* with thoſe of thy brethren on whom Gods hand is heavy, let thy bowels yearn at their ſad diſtreſſes, and
Jer. 9. 1. make them the objects of thy greateſt compaſſion. [*Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the ſlain of the daughter of my people!*] This was the wiſh of that compaſſionate *Prophet*; do thou likewiſe *weep with thoſe that weep*, and make thy ſelf a partaker in their miſery by pitying of them: go into the *houſe of mourning*, and *now if ever* lay aſide thy looſer ſports and jollities; this is not a time for immoderate mirth, which may both make thee forget thy ſelf and the ſad condition of thy brethren. Mark therefore that woe which is pronounced againſt the wanton *Iſrae-*
Amos 6. 1, 3, 4, 5, 6. *lites*, and I fear it reaches to many in our days; *Wo to them that are at eaſe in Sion--ye that put far away the evill day; that lie upon beds of Ivory, and ſtretch themſelves upon their couches, and eat the lambs of the flock, and the calves out of the midſt of the ſtall; that chant to the ſound of the viol, and invent to themſelves inſtruments of muſick like David* (but not to ſuch holy purpoſes as He did) *that drink wine in bowls, and annoint themſelves with the chief oyntments; but they are not greived for the affliction of Joſeph*: And take that
verſ. 7. which follows, *Therefore now ſhall they go captive with the firſt that go captive: and the banquet of them that ſtretched themſelves ſhall be removed.* If any perſons before others ſhall feel the ſevere hand of God upon them, *theſe* are they.

The next *Direction* which I think will be hugely ſeaſonable at preſent is, that we *now act all our graces more vigorouſly then ever, and ſtir up the gift of God which is in us.* For times of diſtreſs and calamity will try us: now
Epheſ. 5. 16. we ſhall be called forth to *do* and *ſuffer*. *Let us then walk circumſpectly, not as fools, but as wiſe, redeeming the time becauſe the days* (we live in) *are evil.* Now we muſt *take double money in our hands*; our *ordinary* care will not ſerve the turn, now we have much work to do, and our time wherein we ſhould diſpatch it is uncertain; we carry our lives in our hands, and therefore let us think that the advice

vice of the *Royall Preacher* is more especially directed to every one of us at present [*Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might, for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledg, nor wisdome in the grave whither thou goest.*] Eccle. 9. 10. Now then you ought to be on your gaurd, *your loynes* muit be *girt about*, and *your lights burning*, as servants attending their Master's business, ready to do any thing that he shall enjoyn them. Now you had need *exhort one another daily while it is called to day*; now must you look narrowly after the concerns of your *own souls*, and do what you can by sober advice and councel, by exhortation and Brotherly reproof, by a holy and exemplary life to make your neighbours better. *What maner of persons ought you to be in all holy conversation and Godlinesse?* 2 Pet. 3. 11. Let me under this *Direction* leave with you but these *four* words, which are the abridgment of what I have said already;

1. Converse with God more vigorously then ever, *unite your forces*, and *wrestle strongly* with Him, till you prevail for *your selves*, for this *sinful land*, for this *distressed Town*. 2. Disingage your affections more resolvedly from the world: you see the vanity of it daily, you have fresh experiences of the uncertainty of all creature comforts; let your hearts be taken off from them even whilest you do possess them, and be ready to *part* with them. 3. Act *Faith* more strongly, and trust on *God* when the *world* fails you. 4. Walk more warily and strictly in your lives, throw not away your time so vainly as heretofore, be more sober and watchful, minding the welfare of your *own souls*, and calling upon *others* to serve God and credit the Christian Religion by a holy life. Act to the utmost of your power in the place God hath set you, *be not weary in well doing, for in due season you shall reap if you faint not.* Gal. 6. 9.

And lastly, to draw to a conclusion, when it shall please God in much mercy to remove the present *Plague* and judgment from this Town, remember that you faithfully keep those vows and promises which you made unto God in the day of your fears and distresses, [*Call upon me* (saith God) *in the day of trouble and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorifie me.*] Psal 50. 15. See then that you glorifie God by walk-

ing anſwerably to the mercies and deliverances vouchſafed
Pſal. 76. 11. to you, *Vow and pay unto the Lord your God.* When you are taken out of the *Furnace of affliction*, do not return to your former *hardneſs* and *inflexibleneſs*. If you have laid aſide your ſins in your affliction, do not afterwards take them up again when the affliction is removed. Do not as *Pharaoh* did, who cryed out to have the *Plagues* taken away, and withal acknowledged his ſin, and asked forgiveneſs, and made large promiſes of amendment; but when his requeſt was granted, he hardned his heart, and returned to his former wickedneſs. 'Twas a bad requital *Noah* made for his eſcaping the *flood*, to be *drowned* afterwards in *wine*. 'Twill be ſad for thee, if thy *reſolutions* of *living well* end at laſt in *forgetfulneſs* of *God*, and *diſhonouring of his Name* by by a moſt ſcandalous life. Think of it well then, and be ſincere and cordial in thy purpoſes, and if (with *Hezekiah*) thou haſt *years added to thy life*, add likewiſe to thy promiſes and reſolves a holy and blameleſs converſation. If God ſhall in *love to thy ſoul deliver it from the pit of corruption*, do thou ſhew thy ſelf thankful unto him, by *walk-*
Pſal. 66. 12, *ing in newneſs of life*. If God ſhall *bring thee out into a wealthy place*, then *pay the vows which thy lips have uttered, and*
13, 14. *thy mouth hath ſpoken when thou waſt in trouble*. If the Lord hath heard thy voice and ſupplications, when *the ſorrows of death compaſſed thee*, and *thou didſt finde trouble and ſorrow*; if he hath *delivered thy ſoul from death, thine eyes from tears, and thy feet from falling*, break forth into the
Pſ. 116. 9, 12, *Pſalmiſts* profeſſions of love and duty to God for his de-
13, 14, 17, 18. liverance, [*I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living. What ſhall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me? I will take the cup of ſalvation, and call upon the name of the Lord. I will offer to thee the ſacrifice of thanſgiving---I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the preſence of all his people.*] Of the *ten Lepers* which were healed by our *Saviour*, there was but *one* of them returned to give thanks unto Him. We are greedy of mercies, but how backward are we to acknowledg the receipt of them, and to walk worthy of them? But let us now at length bethink our ſelves of our duty, and reſolve to put our *reſo-*
John 5. 14. *lutions* into *action*: [*Sin no more, leſt a worſe thing come*

unto

unto thee.] This was the advice of that *great Spiritual Phyſitian*, thus runs his *Bill* for that man whom he had formerly healed of a *bodily diſeaſe*. Oh! let us have a care of a *Relapſe*, for that will prove unſpeakably dangerous and deſtructive to us. 'Twas a ſad aggravation of the *Iſraelites* ſins, (acknowledged by the *Levites* in their Solemn Confeſſion) *that after they had reſt, they did evil again before God.* Sins committed after great mercies, are of a Crimſon dye, and are beyond meaſure ſinful: theſe do cauſe the *fulleſt vials* of Gods wrath to be poured down upon us; if there be any ſins that eſcape puniſhment, to be ſure theſe are not they, as it follows in that place before-named, [*Therefore lefteſt thou them in the hand of their enemies.*] Thoſe Cities, Towns and Families which are, or ſhall be delivered from the *noiſom Peſtilence*, may very fitly take up the words of *Ezra*, [*After all that is come upon us for our evil deeds, and for our great treſpaſs; ſeeing that thou our God haſt puniſhed us leſs then our iniquities deſerve, and haſt given us ſuch deliverance as this, ſhould we again break thy Commandments, and joyn in affinity with the people of theſe abominations, wouldſt thou not be angry with us till thou haſt conſumed us, ſo that there ſhould be no remnant nor eſcaping?* Yea, the *Rod* ſhall go about again, the ſeverities of Gods vengeance ſhall over-take us, *God will lay judgment to the line, and righteouſneſs to the plummet, and the hail ſhall ſweep away the refuge of lyes—and your covenant with death ſhall be diſannulled, and your agreement with hell ſhall not ſtand; when the overflowing ſcourge ſhall paſs thorow, then ye ſhall be trodden down by it, from the time that it goeth forth it ſhall take you, for morning by morning it ſhall paſs over, by day and by night, and it ſhall be a vexation onely to underſtand the report: for the Lord ſhall riſe up as in mount Perazim, he ſhall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that he may do his work, his ſtrange work, and bring to paſs his act, his ſtrange act.*] God will not ſpare, neither will he have pity, but he will recompence our ways upon our heads: He hath *variety* of puniſhments, he hath a *ſtore-houſe* of judgments, he hath a *bundle* of rods, he hath *ſeveral vials* of wrath, and he will pour them *all* out upon an ungrateful, faithleſs and perverſe people.

Ezra 9.13,14

Neh. 9. 28.

Iſa. 28.17,18, 19,21.

Levit. 26. 18, 21, 24, 28. people. [*I will punish you seven times more for your sins, and I will bring seven times more Plagues upon you according to your sins.*] Nay, this *numerous* curse is twice more repeated and denounced against those that *will not hearken unto God*, but *walk contrary to Him*. And to shut up all, after God had smartly reproved and upbraided the *Israelites* for their incorrigibleness, and reckoned up those several judgments which he had inflicted on them, & amongst the rest, the *Pestilence*) and at the end of every one of them had complained that nevertheless they had not returned unto him,

Amos 4. 12. [*Therefore* (in the close of all says he) *thus will I do unto thee O Israel*, (namely, as thy sins deserve, and as I have denounced against thee) *and because I will do this unto thee, PREPARE TO MEET THY GOD, O Israel.*

1 Tim. 1, 17. *Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

FINIS.